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Volume XXXIV/No. 12

IN THIS ISSUE **PAGE**

Editorial: Christmas Bonus 3
Letters 3
Mistletoe and Its Legends 4
Just a Trout Fishing Story 6
Game Birds and Pesticides 8
Serendipity and the Pump Box Peromyscus 10
Are We Hunters Our Own Worst Enemy? 11
Conservationgram 13
Share Your Venison 14
Old Jerky Is New Outdoor Treat 15
The Mystery of the Deserted Bird Feeder 16
Crafting a Fur Hat 18
A Matter of Esthetics 19
Wild Tails of Virginia 21
Bird of the Month: The American Scoter 22
The Drumming Log 23
Youth Afield 24
Know Your Wardens: L. R. Buchanan; L. L. Humphreys 25
On the Waterfront 26
Index to Virginia Wildlife, 1973 27
"Give Virginia Wildlife for Christmas" 28

Observations, conclusions and opinions expressed in *Virginia Wildlife* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the members or staff of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

COVER: Black-capped chickadee, by Arthur LaMay of Sterling, Virginia.

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EDITORIAL

CHRISTMAS BONUS

ALTHOUGH not exactly a Christmas gift, hunters in Virginia should be well on their way to collecting a big bonus this fall in the form of record game harvests. An all-time record deer harvest of 54,765 is predicted as a result of high populations and liberal seasons. We still have a huntable bear population in Virginia even though a number of neighboring states have closed their seasons. Following a record spring turkey harvest and a record annual turkey kill, this fall's turkey prospects suggest another record or near record bag. All indications are that quail hunting should be excellent. Squirrel and grouse are suffering a temporary setback this year, but both of these species have offered hunters good to excellent shooting not too many years back. In short, Virginia's game populations seem to be in excellent shape. This is no accident, but instead a dividend to sportsmen for their contribution and their confidence.

The science of game management and Virginia's game populations have both come a long way since the Game Commission was created in 1916. Although most habitat changes that have come about in the name of progress have been detrimental to small game populations, we still enjoy good to excellent hunting for native Virginia species. We have a one-week pheasant season and a good possibility that hunting for this new addition to our fauna will assume greater importance in the future. But it is in the area of *big game* management that the payoff has been most noticeable.

Deer populations began to reach the carrying capacity of ranges in several Virginia counties in the late 1950's and the early 1960's. There followed some rather violent fluctuations as various seasons were tried to control the growing herds. As these waves leveled out, the control of deer populations has become more and more precise. Last year's kill prediction was within a few animals of the exact total and, except for the uncertain influence of meat prices and some rather extensive liberalization of seasons, we would expect this year's estimate to be as close. The state-wide turkey kill has hovered around 6000 for the past four years, which is a pretty good example of consistency. Research is now under way to determine why bear kills fluctuate as widely as they do, apparently more closely allied with seasonal changes than with hunting seasons.

Yes, by the time this hunting season ends, Virginia sportsmen should have many pleasant memories of full game bags and exhilarating days afield. They can take pride in the fact that their investment of money and support of Commission programs made it all possible.—H. L. G.

LETTERS

Shut Out

I am sure that your organization is aware of the fact that Sandy Run Marina and Pete Petrola's Marina on Occoquan Reservoir have been closed to the public. Formerly Fairfax County and Alexandria fishermen could take a pleasant twenty to thirty minute drive to either of the above and rent or launch a boat, purchase live bait and a cold beer, and go fishing. In addition one could camp for the night or weekend. In short, the two facilities provided a real and appreciated convenience and service to sportsmen residing in my area.

This situation changed suddenly when the marinas were seized by the State.

Although Bull Run Marina is a very fine facility, it is still an additional ten miles and thirty minutes away over narrow, twisting, dangerous roads.

My question is: Why in the name of "Creeping State Socialism" would the State close down two facilities so heavily patronized by area sportsmen?

Richard C. Martin
Alexandria

Sandy Run Marina and Petrola's Marina on Occoquan Reservoir were located on property now owned and operated by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. It was this Authority, which is supported by the citizens of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church, that closed these facilities. Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority operates Bull Run Marina and recently opened Fountainhead Park, which is located 3 miles from Sandy Run on Route 647. Rental boats, bait and fishing tackle are available and a ramp for launching private boats is scheduled to be in operation at Fountainhead by next summer.
—N. S. Prosser, *Supervising Fish Biologist*

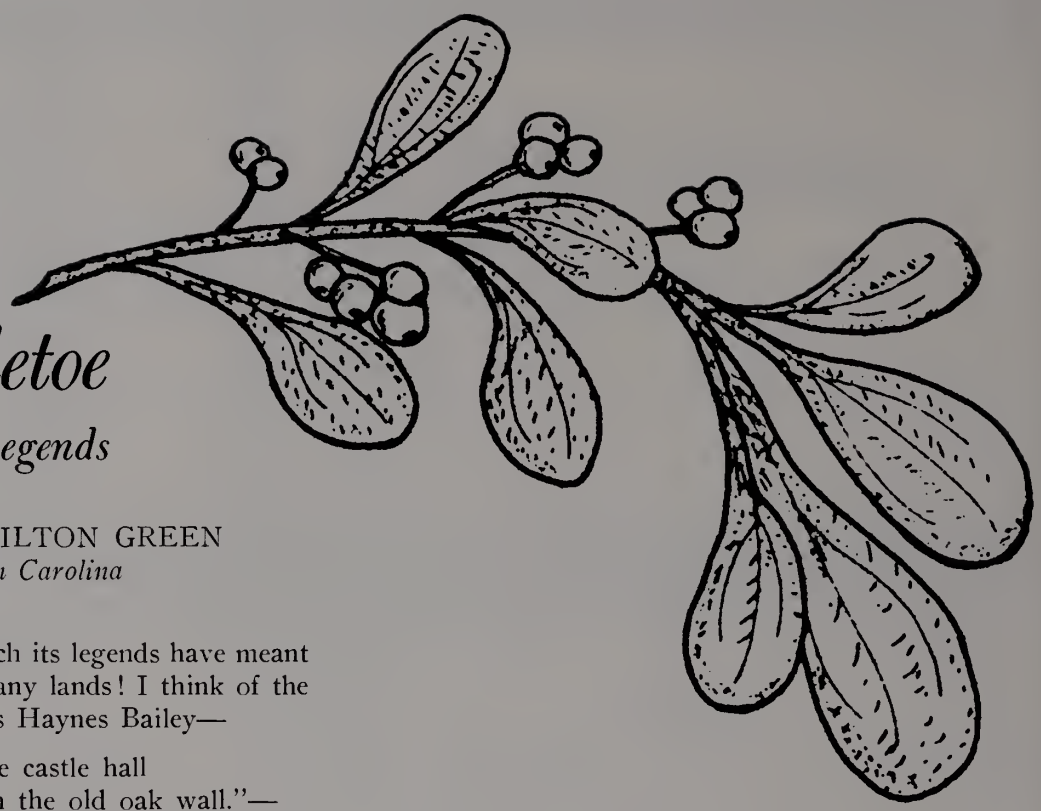
Not "hunted to death"

I quote from your September "Bird of the Month: The Bobolink": "Such heavy autumnal shooting greatly reduced their numbers, and the bobolinks have never recovered their former abundance. . . ."

You, of all people, should know that any species recovers from hunting pressure in a season or two as long as a minimum breeding stock remains. It is loss of habitat to encroaching man that causes the extinction of most endangered species. The bobolink article mentions habitat changes, but does not assign them clearly and directly as the causes of the decrease in the bobolink population.

Let's stop blaming the hunter (even the market hunter or poacher) in those cases where the true blame lies at the door of the farmer and the urban developer! We may have needed, and may still need, more farms and cities, but it is they and not the hunter that are cutting back on wildlife in the vast majority of cases.

J. Charles Thompson
Arlington



Mistletoe

and Its Legends

By CHARLOTTE HILTON GREEN
Raleigh, North Carolina

MISTLETOE—how much its legends have meant to many peoples of many lands! I think of the old rhymes of Thomas Haynes Bailey—

"The mistletoe hung in the castle hall
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall."—

and marvel that it is still being used at Christmastide, not only in "oaken halls" but in today's modernistic "high-rise" apartments. For the Yuletide and its legends bring a tug at the heart, especially if we are in lands far from home.

I recall a yellowed clipping in one of my books, written by someone no less than Roy Chapman Andrews, then Director of the American Museum of Natural History. Its date is 1937.

"One Christmas I was camped in the mountains of the Tibetan frontier. In the back of my tent I set up a small spruce tree and decorated it with candles and bits of cotton and holly. From the ridgepole just over the door hung a bunch of mistletoe, which I had found the day before while hunting a herd of wild monkeys. The bunch of mistletoe seemed to make it really Christmas." Christmas to a lonely man in a faraway, cold, wild and forbidding land.

Why? What is the hold mistletoe has on us that at this holy season tons of it are being shipped from our own Appalachia to great cities of our own—and in other lands, to other regions? In Appalachia it grows plentifully on many of its trees; the problem is collecting, or harvesting it, as it usually grows near the tips of branches of mature trees.

Climbing is hazardous, as too often those upper limbs will not support much weight; but those resourceful mountaineers find a way. Most of them are "mighty hunters" who can "hit a squirrel in the left eye" and so are adept at shooting down clumps of mistletoe with a rifle.

And what is this plant that we still want at the Yuletide? And why that hold? Legends, traditions, folklore, going back thousands of years—mistletoe still plays a role at Christmas time. There are more than five hundred species in the mistletoe family, some kind found pretty much over the world. A parasite, growing on many kinds of trees, in Europe it lives particularly on apple or hawthorns, and is rarely found on the oak.

In eastern America it seems to prefer hardwood trees. Long before the holiday season, most host tree leaves will be gone and then these clumps of the evergreen plant, with its own yellowish-green leaves, are easy to discern.

A native of Europe the mistletoe of legend (*Viscum album*), derives its name from the Greek words meaning "thief" and "tree" for, as a parasite, it derives its nourishment from the tree on which it grows. Not many folks are familiar with the tiny yellow flowers, but they are found with the small, pearly-white berries with a sticky juice, which are eaten by many birds.

Thus it is propagated by birds wiping their bills—to which the berries cling—on the branches of trees, and if not dislodged, the seed may germinate. A parasite, it sends little sucker roots into the branches of the tree, gaining a foothold . . . and sometimes doing damage.

Thus not earth-bound, but growing in the air, this mistletoe became a symbol of the spiritual, and was consecrated to religious purposes by the ancient Celtic nations of Europe and was held in peculiar veneration by the Druids, especially when found growing on an oak.

It was supposed to be gathered by a white-robed Druid priest with a golden sickle, and had to be caught in a white cloth before touching the ground.

Not only held in highest esteem by the ancient Britons, because of its supposed magical virtues, it was also a charm against witchcraft and was used as a medicine.

Considered sacred to Frigga, the Saxon goddess of love, the custom of kissing under the mistletoe at Christmastide is of very ancient origin among the English and Germanic peoples. A kiss could be claimed from anyone caught under the mistletoe as long as the berries lasted.

Another northern legend is that the young sun god, Baldur, was slain with an arrow of mistletoe shot, in play, by his brother and, in dying, he became a symbol of purity and innocence.

But, because of its pagan history, the narrow Christian church forbade the use of mistletoe in ceremonies or as decorations; but a superstitious people continued to use it in secret, hanging it over their doors in the belief it protected them from fits, apoplexy, poison, lung fever . . . and even from witches. Witches, in those ancient days, seemed very real and forbidding. Later, some mistletoe branches were used as "divining rods" somewhat as witch hazel is used even today in some remote regions.

In Europe, too, mistletoe is still held in high esteem as a Christmas decoration used with holly. At one time large quantities were gathered from the famed apple orchards of Normandy and shipped to England each year.

But England, too, has much mistletoe of its own, parasites on its large apple orchards. "Following the spring north" (just as he had in his now famous American *North With the Spring* that led to a demand for his other "seasonal" books), Edwin Way Teale, in his *Springtime in Britain,* speaks of the song of the "missel thrush." Once this fine singer was known as the "mistletoe thrush" because of its fondness for the plant's berries. He refers to Evelyn's *Sylva,* which attributes the propagation of the mistletoe in England mainly to this bird.

His comments re the apple orchards of England are provocative, at least. "In England apples have been eaten for more than 4,000 years. Seeds found among pottery, in Wiltshire, indicate Neolithic man enjoyed the fruit . . . As we advanced northward through Britain's famed orchard country, we noticed that nearly every apple tree contained large clumps of parasitic mistletoe. The dense, rounded masses, some olive-hued, some a lighter shade of green, stood out among the bare branches. This species of mistletoe is more partial to apple trees than to any other tree."

The Teales were a bit early for the bloom, however. "Later, mile upon mile, those trees would be clouded with the white and pink of blossomtime. But, apparently, the orchardists would reap another crop from their trees, for every year, in December, tons of mistletoe are shipped from Herefordshire to London."

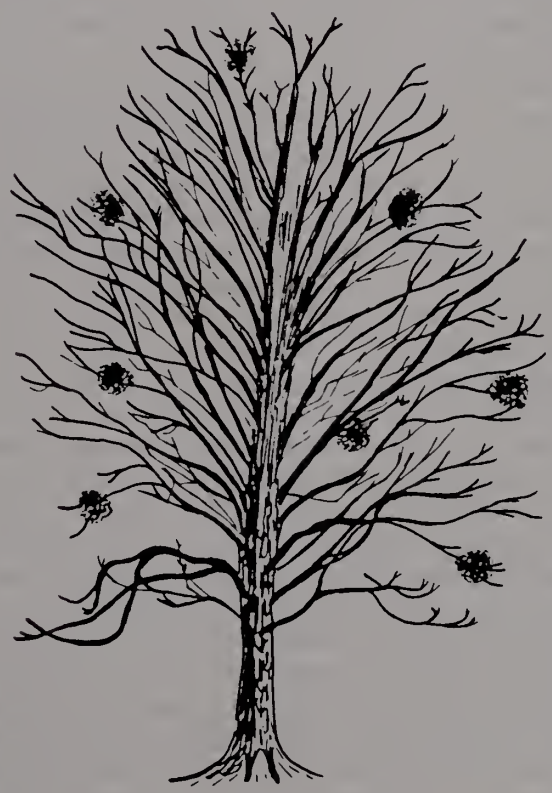
We, in America, also have a bird that might well be called the "mistletoe bird." On a Christmas day, in a California desert, the Teales (then on their "Wandering Through Winter" trek which was the basis for another of his seasonal books, and by that name) found one of their finest gifts of that day: a new species of bird for their "life-list"—the silky flycatcher, known as "phainopepla." (EWT suggests it might well be called "Mistletoe Bird" as "throughout the deserts of the Southwest whenever we encountered concentrations of mistletoe, we looked for and almost always found this bird.")

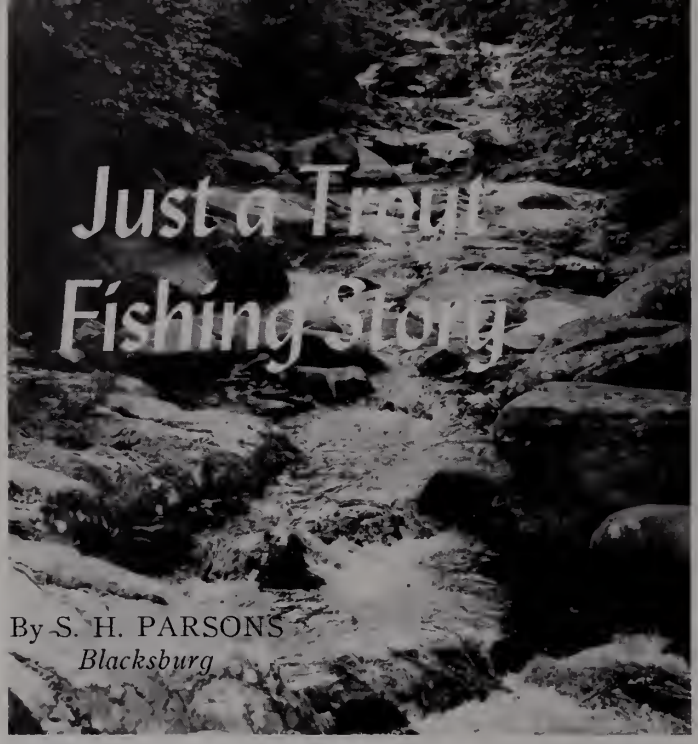
This bird is the only representative of this family in North America and "the male does most of the work of nesting and incubation."

Good for you, Mistletoe Bird!

And the western form of America's mistletoe (*Phoradendron califorica*) produces berries that range from white through pink to red. "Although this desert semi-parasite manufactures its own food, it drains water and obtains minerals from its host, and, in time, may cause its death."

But this is no time to talk of death! Soon, now, it will be time "to hang the mistletoe and the holly in our own halls"—and may their message be a modern hope of "Good will to all men"—at a time when such good will may never have been more needed.





Just a Trout Fishing Story

By S. H. PARSONS
Blacksburg

ONE particular Friday in the month was exceptionally warm and pretty. Clear sky and stately mountains met the eye everywhere, so with trusty shovel and coffee can I drove from Blacksburg to a local Montgomery County farm and began digging for the little red worms that native trout enjoy so much. Finding a good supply, the next step was calling two of my V.P.I.&S.U. college buddies, sophomore Mike Hall from Annandale, Virginia, and Greg Venning, junior, from Roanoke, who were as zany as I about fishing, and arranging a trip for the following morning. Who cared if it was the middle of January? The weather seemed perfect.

Seven o'clock, gear packed, and a gigantic breakfast of creamed beef, toast, eggs, grits and fresh perked coffee behind us, we were on our way. Everyone was in high spirits. Even though gusts of cold wind and overcast sky greeted us on departure, nothing was going to spoil the day, especially something as insignificant as a little nasty weather. Overnight, the previous almost autumn-like day had reverted to gloomy winter.

Greg pointed his passenger car toward Giles County. The drive on 460, one I have taken numerous times, is never tiring, for the surrounding mountains contain such tranquility and beauty they're a pleasure to watch glide by from your window. On this Saturday, however, they were holding an increasing amount of threatening black clouds. The wind picked up as we passed Pembroke and turned onto route 635 beside the New River, as well as our anticipation. This was a first for us today because the stream was one we had never fished or explored before—a tributary of Big Stony Creek, nestled between Fork Mountain and Peters Mountain, which is the Virginia-West Virginia border.

Route 635 winds through timber country and beside much of stocked Big Stony, with its large, deep pools and fast-moving water. Jefferson National Forest includes large amounts of the creek and surrounding land. Soon, with the aid of a Forest Service map, we were off the hard surface and on an old logging road that enabled us to drive closer than expected to the stream. Thirty-five hundred feet up the mountain was as far as the car could go on the rough, unimproved dirt, so it was out, get the gear and start walking. Snow was beginning to fall and the wind was howling. The beauty of the country, the sheer desolation and solitude were incredible, but once out of the warm car we were jolted back to the world of Nature's cold and relentless arrogance. Quickly everyone put on waders and got fly rods, creels and "divy" of worms. After the preliminary jokes of what kind of fools would fish in snow squalls and a belt of red wine for warm-up purposes, we moved over a ridge in high hopes of catching the best-tasting native trout in the United States.

The going was tough. The mountain was jutted and slick and my hands got pretty cold, but all was soon forgotten as we jumped three good-sized deer. They were nibbling in a little clearing when first spotted and then up went those white flags, jumping and bounding over brush piles. In a short distance they stopped and watched us, seeming to say they knew hunting season was over and, besides that, a fishing rod couldn't hurt 'em. Mike noted that the only time he ever sees deer is before and after the season, a comment probably made by many hunters.

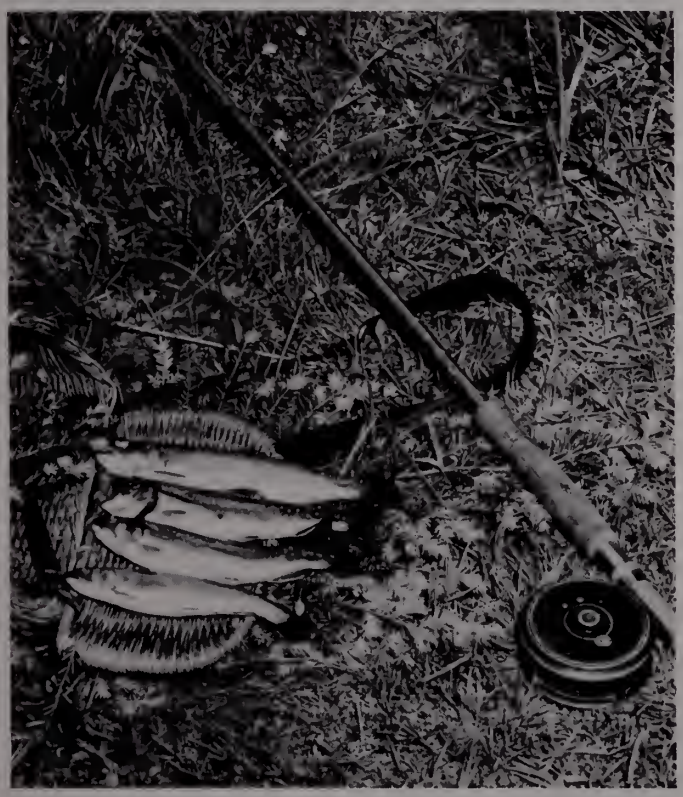
The snow was powdery and blowing in all directions. When we reached the water, slicing between two whitened ridges, an inch was on the ground and a thick growth of rhododendron bowed its branches to the weight. The stream, curling and bubbling through the terrific maze of growth, was not large but exceptionally nice. We were pleased with the creek and began walking up the little valley in a half crouch, hoping to run into clearer and more accessible banks. This was an evergreen jungle. Each time your head would bend to get under a branch, fine light snow sifted down your collar. Boy, trout had to be in this place, for it was so dense few people could crawl in there much less get fish out. Another good sign: we saw no beer cans or garbage some pseudo-outdoorsmen throw in the woods. Shortly, with no clearing in sight, we decided you can't catch fish unless your line is in the water, so rods began piecing together.

The snow was falling harder, with a hissing sound like spitting on a hot log. This was a day where a man could make peace with himself, leaving worries behind and wondering how he could be so fortunate to find and be fascinated by this almost dreamland splendor. The colors of the forest were distinct and unique; dark, black-green rhododendron leaves, sparkling dry snow, crystal-clear fresh water, and brownish bark were only

few of the shades there are any words to describe. The worn, timeless mountains were showing their best winter beauty.

There are certain normal prerequisites taken to enable one to catch the wary natural trout. You must not cast shadows on the water; you have to be quiet; your bait must be presented in a natural manner and cover difficult spots; and you must stay out of the water if at all possible. We had no choice, because of the growth, but to slide silently into the stream. The effect was one of being in a long green and white tunnel, for the branches made an archway, forcing us in a half stoop to fish. All the cold and snow was worth wetting the line.

We took turns fishing in front of each other with a half hour passing without a nibble. Trout had to be there, but we thought because of the cold, snow and our sometimes slipping and splashing, they just weren't biting. The eyes on our rods were freezing as well as the worms if they stayed out of the water for long, so we decided to try a new method, and if there were no results, we'd head toward Blacksburg. We had fished hard, so agreement was reached to slow down more than usual, because the brookies were not looking for worms and it was harder for them to see in the grayness of the day. It paid off, as Mike scored first on a nice fish around eight inches, which is good for natives in a majority of eastern states. He continually floated his worm past a submerged log, which created a riffle that trout lurk in. Ten or twelve passes and the trout streaked toward the bait. Of course, getting a strike is difficult but keeping him on the line and landing him is the real chore. It was a job working the fish with the overhanging brush fouling the rod but he played it right, keeping him low in the water with slight but steady pressure and edging him toward the bank. Greg and I stopped to admire this beautiful big-headed trout, with the brilliant red and orange spots and streaks on the side and pinkish white belly. They'll take your breath when held up to sunlight, for they sparkle like gold and fight as good as they look.



Game Commission photo by Harrison

We continued to work slowly and methodically, fishing the riffles and small pools. It's a thrilling sight watching the fly line snake down the stream and wham!—tension on the line as the small natives hit like a hammer.

The stream widened as we moved below to about 3000 feet altitude, where it crossed a small ford impassable for cars. The rhododendron thinned and the pools were larger. Here Greg caught the largest of the day, an eleven incher, in a four-foot deep pool that dumped over a log. He had room to play this one and it was a nice sight to see, keeping tension on the line and working the fish along. He struck beside a big overhung rock, where the water slid under, sucking towards the little falls. He fought well but ole Greg was too much for him this bout.

The stream forked in several places but always within a hundred yards returned to the main body. Every nook and bend were probable places to fish. Natives seem to take dominion in one spot and stay alone, perhaps an entire lifetime because the competition for food is so great. Although normally small (four to eight inches), if one is hooked, you'll know a trout is on the line, for they fight furiously. Small worms and tiny hooks will usually get a strike under most conditions, if fished correctly.

We caught some twelve fish between the three of us, releasing five of the small ones that were only four or five inches. They all had wild, clean beauty that only trout born in a stream possess. It was a cold, happy threesome, with frozen fingers and faces, who left the rumbling creek, heading toward the automobile with fish in the creel and a feeling only trout fishermen know. Perhaps author Robert Ruark summed up fishing best: "Water eases the mind, soothes the eye, calms the nerves and you can always eat the fish."

I have caught trout in Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada and California but never has skill and patience been more important than in the peaceful highlands of southwest Virginia. The beauty and magic rush of the water; the comradeship of good friends; gentle, mellow mountains; and yes, occasionally, a brook trout over twelve inches makes trout fishing an enjoyable and refreshing pastime. There is good water in the East, but you have to work to catch native brookies, especially in the snow.

GAME BIRDS AND PESTICIDES

By JOE L. COGGIN
Supervising Game Biologist
and
HAL W. MYERS, JR.
District Game Biologist

THE Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries has been trying to establish pheasants in this state since Dr. Gardner Bump first introduced foreign species to us in 1957.

Numerous releases of pheasants have been made. Some of these releases have resulted in complete failure, whereas we have experienced enough success in some of the northern and eastern counties to warrant a short hunting season.

One release site in Campbell County that appeared to have an established pheasant population (for about nine years) indicated a very severe drop in pheasant population immediately after a farmer began to plant treated seed wheat and milo for seed production. It has not been proven that planting the treated seed caused the sudden decline, but it can be determined if the potential for killing birds is significant through the use of chemicals now available to farmers.

Previous studies concerning the amounts of various pesticides that can be tolerated by many species of birds have been conducted during the past ten years. The Fish and Wildlife Research Refuge at Patuxent, Maryland, along with some other research centers, has accumulated a great deal of information on this subject. A Game Commission study was initiated not to determine the lethal dosages for the various species involved, but to determine whether or not the treated products (wheat and milo) that are sold on the Virginia market are lethal to pheasants, quail and doves under various conditions. This means that we were dealing with the combinations of pesticides in forms commonly used for seed treatment and available to farmers in Virginia.

Other studies have concerned themselves with carefully measured dosages of pure pesticide material administered under controlled conditions. This is obviously necessary to establish the amount of a chemical it would take to kill a bird, but it does not reflect the effects these chemicals may have on wild birds under normal agricultural practices.

Birds were tested on wheat treated with DDT because the Campbell County farm in question planted wheat with this treatment just prior to the pheasant decline. The Ceresan treatment for wheat was tested because this is the treatment currently used on seed wheat.

Milo was the principal seed crop grown on the Campbell County area, but only one seed treatment was used throughout the period.

The treatments used for the grains tested are as follows:

1. Wheat: DDT .066 oz. per bushel
2. Wheat: Ceresan .07 oz. per bushel and Malathion .09 oz. per bushel
3. Milo: 60% Captan, 12.75% Hexachloroepoxyoetahydro-endo, exo-dimethanonphthalene and 2.25%Dieldrin at rate of 1.96 oz. per bushel

The test proceeded as follows:

Ten birds were placed in one cage and fed a diet of untreated wheat, and ten birds were placed in another cage and fed a diet of untreated milo. We called these two cages the control for each grain tested.

Other cages containing ten birds each were fed a diet of all treated grain and a mixture of ½ treated and ½ untreated grain.

The diet continued for ten days because it was felt that this would be the longest exposure likely to occur in the field. A fresh supply of water and grit was provided. The following tables show the kinds of treatment tested and the results for each species indicated:

TABLE 1. TYPE OF TREATMENT TESTED AND THE EFFECTS ON PHEASANTS

Cage No.	Dates Treated	Types of Treatment	Amount Fed per day (in grams)	Number Sick	Number Dead
1	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	Treated Milo	1520		10
2	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	Milo--½ treated and ½ untreated	1520		5
3	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	*** Wheat (1971) treated	1596	4	1
4	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	**Wheat (1970) treated	1528	3	2
5	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	Wheat (1971) ½ treated and ½ untreated	1596	5	2
Control					
6	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	Milo	(unlimited)	0	0
7	Oct. 19-Nov. 5	Wheat	(unlimited)	2*	1

* All birds showed symptoms of diarrhea when switched to a sprouted grain diet.
** DDT Treatment *** Ceresan Treatment

Notice that all ten of the pheasants which were exposed to treated milo were dead by the end of the study period. Eight of these birds died during the ten-day period. After this period these birds were fed fresh sprouted milo and the other two birds died. We terminated the study with the sprouted grains (both wheat and milo) at the end of ten days because the birds developed severe symptoms of diarrhea, in both the treated pens and the controls. We simply demonstrated that the birds could not switch from a dry to a green diet without developing ill effects.

There was a clear indication that pheasants selected untreated rather than treated grain, when they were exposed to both at the same time. They refused to eat any of the treated milo after the first day.

All pheasants except one that died from the wheat treatments succumbed after they were given a diet of sprouted grain. The one bird that died earlier was injured while changing from one cage to the other.

Three of the birds in cage two died during the ten-day initial treatment and two died after having been fed sprouted milo.

TABLE II. TYPE OF TREATMENT TESTED AND THE EFFECTS ON BOBWHITE QUAIL

Cage no.	Dates treated	Types of Treatment	Amount Consumed (in table-spoons)	No. sick	No. dead
1	10-21/10-30	***Treated Wheat (1971)	274	0	1
3	10-21/10-30	Wheat–½ Treated and ½ untreated	Plain–297 Treated-80	0	0
4	10-21/10-30	**Treated Wheat (1970)	304	0	0
5	10-21/10-26	Treated Milo	32	10	10
6	10-21/10-30	Milo–½ treated and ½ untreated	Plain–225 Treated-32	1	1
Control					
W	10-21/10-30	Plain Wheat	(unlimited)	0	0
M	10-21/10-30	Plain Milo	(unlimited)	0	0
1-A	11-1/11-10	2-days treated Milo, then 8 days plain wheat	Treated—12*	10	0
Control					
2-A	11-1/11-10	Plain Wheat	(unlimited)	0	0

* On second day two birds were sick; all birds sluggish and drooped, tending to walk with a jerking motion. Birds recovered during 8-day feed test on regular diet of plain wheat.

** DDT Treatment *** Ceresan Treatment

It can be readily seen from the table above that all quail in cage 5 were dead by the end of the 10-day period.

Actually, these birds began to get sick on the second day and all were dead within six days. Because of this, it was decided to treat ten birds for two days and then place them on an untreated diet. We determined that all birds became noticeably inactive but recovered after eight days on a regular diet.

Only one quail was lost in Cage 1 and in Cage 6, but this ten-percent loss is not considered significant because it was not clear whether or not death was due to the treatment since no other birds became ill.

Quail showed a definite preference for untreated milo and wheat when the two grains were fed in equal amounts at the same time. Throughout the ten-day period the birds consumed 79 percent untreated wheat and 21 percent treated wheat. They consumed 88 percent untreated milo and 12 percent treated milo.

TABLE III. TYPE OF TREATMENT TESTED AND THE EFFECTS ON DOVES

Cage No.	Dates Treated	Types of Treatment	Amount Consumed (in table-(spoons)	No. Sick	No. Dead
1	8-26/9-4	****Treated Wheat (1971)	281	0	0
2	8-26/9-4	Wheat—½ treated and ½ untreated (1971)	210—treated 210—untreated	0	0
3	8-26/9-4	***Treated Wheat (1970)	359	0	1*
Control					
4	8-26/9-4	Plain Wheat	(unlimited)	0	2*
5	8-26/8-30	Treated Milo (1971)	26½	10	10
6	8-26/9-4	Milo—½ treated and ½ untreated	30—treated** 30—untreated (daily)		0
Control					
7	8-26/9-4	Plain Milo	300	0	0
1-A	9-9/9-17	1-day treated Milo, then 7 days plain Milo	(unlimited)	0	0
2-A	9-9/9-17	Plain Milo	(unlimited)	0	0

* Birds in Cage 3 on 8-27 believed to be result of diarrhea caused by change in source of plain wheat supply.

** No *treated* consumed after first day; birds would not take treated grain when given a choice.

*** DDT Treatment **** Ceresan Treatment

All the doves in Cage 5 which were on a straight diet of treated milo were dead within 5 days after treatment. All birds were sick within two days; but in a later study when ten birds were fed treated milo for one day and then switched to a regular diet, none of them became ill and none died.

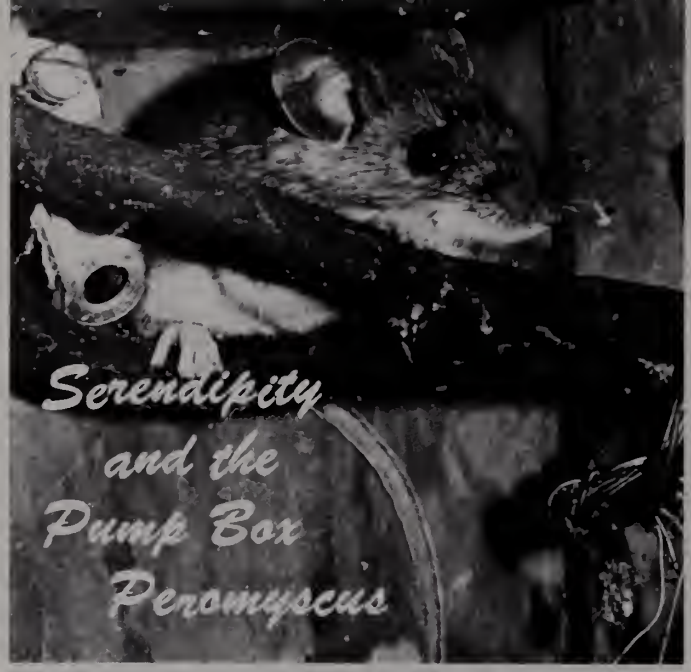
Doves indicated an obvious preference for untreated milo when both treated and untreated was available. They did not consume any treated milo after the first day. They consumed treated and untreated wheat in about equal amounts.

Conclusions:

(1) This study does not prove that treated grains did or did not cause the decline of the pheasants in question. However, it does show the conditions that would cause treated milo to be detrimental. It should be pointed out that other releases in this western Piedmont section also proved to be failures, but in the Campbell County release, all milo exposed to wild birds during the spring planting season was treated and there was no other choice of agricultural grains available. This could be an important point in view of the fact that pheasants selected untreated rather than treated grain when exposed to both at the same time.

(2) According to evidence produced by this study, pheasants had to eat treated milo for three days before becoming ill, and none died in less than five days after treatment began.

(3) No birds were believed killed by either the Ceresan or the DDT wheat treatments. However, one bird was injured by handling and two birds died after a switch from dry to sprouted grains.



Serendipity and the Pump Box Peromyscus

By JAMES A. SULLIVAN
Division of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences
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WHOEVER built it probably didn't think of himself as a wildlife manager. It just happened that way. I mean, not every management act is based upon years of experience or research or even a plan. Management may simply happen because someone removes something from where it had been, or puts something where it never was.

Take Texas' turkeys. Little did the power companies and wildlife managers foresee any relationship between powerlines and wild turkeys. The turkeys, however, found the massive towers to be quite suitable as roosts. In the same way, whoever installed the switch box for the water pump executed a management act. The species affected is the white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) and the act: supplying a suitable nest-box.

The first time I went to turn on the pump, I was quite amazed to find a half dozen mice scurrying within. One ran up the cables to hide under the fuse box. Another crouched in the corner. Yet others chose to escape via the "fire-pole," sounding like acorns hitting the ground three feet below.

In reading about the white-footed mouse, I have found little evidence to suggest that large groups live together. Typically, the home ranges of adults (especially of the same sex) do not overlap. But in the pump box, I have found as many as ten animals at one time, six of which had adult pelage. I have found them in these large numbers even in August and September, when the temperature would not necessitate huddling to conserve heat.

The construction of the box is excellent. It is made of wood and has a slanted tin roof. When the door is closed, the box is virtually weatherproof. The tangle of wires and cables inside leads from hiding places under and on top of the fuse box to an escape route through the floor, and serves as a framework for the nest in one corner.

The location of the box is equally as good. Surrounded by a number of large sycamores and not so large box elders, the box is about thirty feet uphill from the spring, which constantly supplies free water. Moreover, the area around the spring is quite moist—a rocky habitat characterized by numerous snails, insects and jewelweed, all favorites in the diet of the white-footed mouse. Thirty yards to the south is a field planted in corn each year. Thirty yards to the north is an old field which supplies a variety of annuals. Between the box and each of the adjacent feeding areas—the spring, the old field, the corn field—there is plenty of cover for safe movement.

Despite the lack of a plan to manage for *Peromyscus,* the pump box builder did, in fact, supply a long-lasting nest-site; a nest-site protected from the weather and from predators; a nest-site close to food and water; a nest-site which makes the daily trek to the pump box an enjoyable experience.

Are we hunters OUR OWN WORST ENEMY?

By BILL ANDERSON
Grundy

NEVER before in the history of mankind have hunting and firearms come under such heavy fire from so many people. We who hunt have been criticized from every viewpoint by both the emotional and the cold and calculated. By some we would be condemned no matter what the circumstances unless we did just as they wished and never hunted or fired a gun again. But to others we have a chance of justifying ourselves and convincing them that sportsmen aren't all bad, and this may be where we fail.

For many years outdoorsmen in this country have relied on their favorite guns for sport and food. It may be said that pioneers did this out of necessity, but it is hard to imagine that they did so without any feelings of excitement or anticipation. I suspect that when my great-granddad went into the forest with his cap-and-ball rifle it was as much because he enjoyed hunting as it was the need for food. Our forefathers foresaw that private firearms ownership might someday be threatened so they included a protection of this right in the U.S. Constitution.

Too many outdoors people believe that paying taxes and buying licenses fullfills their obligation to their sport. It doesn't. We are a definite minority, and if we sit on our hands we may someday be forbidden to either hunt or even own a gun. By this statement I do not mean that we may be barred from the forests and fields tomorrow or even next year, but it is a slow process that weaves a deadly web around us—a growing public sentiment against guns and hunting.

If we made a survey among hunters, we would probably find as great a cross section of American people as we would find in a survey among operators of motor vehicles. I have hunted with and met in the woods people ranging from illiterate to highly educated, from policemen to preachers. While enjoying their sport, all social and culture barriers are down; they have found a common interest.

Unfortunately, many of these people carry their everyday traits into the outdoors with them: if they litter the highways with trash, they may do the same in the woods; if they obey the law only when there is a good chance they will be arrested, they are apt to obey game laws in the same manner. In respects such as these we become our own enemies.

The true sportsmen who were foresighted enough have fought to save wildlife and its habitat for many years. They were in there fighting before today's ecology "kick" started, back when most people didn't give a hoot. Had it not been for them, there well may have been little today to save for tomorrow.

But many sportsmen are only vaguely aware of the anti-hunting and anti-gun movements. Others shrug and feel that it is no real threat. But it is. The people backing these movements are well organized and spend thousands of dollars annually just to spread information and fight hunting in any way they can. Their power was recently shown when they went to court to head off the opening of a special deer season. This group won hands down against sportsmen and game management people, although the deer population in the area in question had grown to such size that a die-off from starvation threatened.

As a minority, we cannot be silent. I have discovered anti-hunting propaganda almost everywhere, most recently in an advertisement for children's clothes. This ad appeared in millions of magazines. I contacted the president of the firm and received an apology from the advertising agency, but the damage had already been done and no public retraction was made.

A leader of the anti-hunters recently stated, ". . . and I wonder if you have seen the litter and havoc wrought by these wonderful 'sportsmen' you write about. . . ." Others have made more venomous statements such as, "It would be a blessing if all hunters would kill each other."

Have you ever stopped to analyze yourself as an outdoorsman? The person who hunts or shoots is being viewed with such a critical eye that we cannot afford not to. He who has fought so long to help conserve the things he likes best is being crucified by well-meaning but misguided people. Many of these people grab at every straw to try to break the back of the sportsman.

Words and deeds do not fall on deaf ears. We do and say little that is not known to someone else and the people that are really anti-hunting use quotes like "I shot a deer but he got away," "Joe killed a double limit of quail yesterday," "I don't care if it is posted, it's a good place to hunt" as ammunition against us—you can bet your last shell on that.

I once watched two people standing on the shoulder of a busy highway shooting squirrels from overhanging trees. They seemed unconcerned that motorists were, understandably, slowing their vehicles and staring at them. This was not only a flagrant violation of state

law but caused many detrimental remarks against hunting in general.

No matter how pure our motives are, we are judged not only by what we do but also by what we say. Often an outdoorsman will brag of what he or a friend has done; very often these brags are exaggerated with each telling. To another sportsman they may just be a tall tale but to the non-hunter they may be as true as the Gospel. A few years ago a man told to whomever would listen that he had not tagged a deer for several years and, by golly, he would shoot one this year even if it had to be a doe that was left to rot in the woods. We that knew him knew better. In reality he passed up many doe after season opened and again came home with his gun unfired. The point is, how many non-hunters were given an adverse opinion of hunters? How many youngsters decided "That's the way we should hunt!"?

As hunters, shooters, and outdoors people, we should strive to place ourselves above reproach. Anytime we speak of our sport we must try to influence others in a positive way. When we are engaged in shooting or hunting, observers should be favorably impressed by the way in which we conduct ourselves. There are many ways in which we can do this. Some that come to mind follow:

The person that intends to enjoy the outdoors should know the laws that govern his activity, not only man-made laws but laws of common sense and good manners. He should study the man-made laws until he will obey them without second thought when afield. One of our battle cries has been "with regulated hunting the LEGAL hunter will pose no threat to any game species in regard to making it extinct." If we do not obey the law, this statement does not hold much water.

Although there is no denying that we go afield to shoot animals, this should not become an obsession. There are too many other things connected with hunting to be enjoyed besides taking game. It is ridiculous in this day and time to try to see how many animals we can kill during a season or a day. It is equally ridiculous to go through the woods shooting at any living thing. I have observed a few people who would, for example, go grouse hunting and shoot at everything—chipmunks, woodpeckers, or whatever came into their sights. They cared not if it was legal or sensible to do so. I am grateful that few such people hunt.

One who hunts or shoots should strive to be safe with his firearms. He would do well to carry only a quality gun in safe working order. Be mindful that there are other people afield, and always know where your bullet will go if it misses or shoots through your target. Apply the Golden Rule in your association with other sportsmen.

Learn to shoot the gun you choose. Know what it will do and what you can do with it. It is deplorable to leave in the woods a crippled or dead animal that ran away wounded because the hunter tried to shoot too far or too fast. It is also the responsibility of the person who shoots an animal to see that the flesh is not wasted. He should know how to care for the meat from the time the animal is shot until it reaches the table.

However we use the outdoors we should not litter our environment. Unfortunately, we leave everything from piles of garbage to empty food containers and plastic shotshells strewn throughout the forests and fields. These should be carried out of the woods and properly disposed of.

Our respect for others should extend to, especially to, landowners. I know of no quicker way to get banned from hunting than to curse a farmer or damage his property. The sad fact about this is that one discourteous act by one person usually means the end of everyone's hunting. A farm on which I had hunted for years was recently posted because of disrespect and vandalism by a few. The farmer has nothing to lose by posting his land—but you do!

Perhaps most of all in importance is that we should help our young people to attain a good set of moral values concerning outdoorsmanship. They should learn the few aforementioned things, of course, but even more we must instill a love and appreciation of nature, an understanding that we can use and enjoy our God-given environment, if we do so wisely. Such an understanding and appreciation will make them richer and happier in the future.

The day is long overdue for all outdoorsmen to take a long hard look at themselves. The ideas mentioned here are only a few, but they should be a beginning. There are none of us that cannot better our image in our fellowman's eyes; however, hunting is not evil and neither are hunters. But it is the way in which we behave that causes non-shooters to respect or deplore us. One thoughtless act or statement may give someone a negative attitude toward sportsmen. Just remember that when you don your hunting clothes and take up your gun you are representative of all sportsmen, and what you do today may have a great deal of influence on your hunting future.

I am not naive enough to believe that conducting ourselves in the proper manner will still all opposition to hunting. To some people the killing of anything is wrong, per se, regardless of what conditions may exist. Those people need a lot of convincing. But I am convinced that if we abide by a strict code of ethics, anti-hunting sentiment will be lessened.

Often the cries of "stop hunting, ban guns" seem far away, especially to us who live in rural areas. But it is a real threat. With twenty-thousand gun laws on the books and a new one being introduced at some level almost daily, we cannot be passive. Who knows—when they get our guns, our fishing rods may be next.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

SHOOTERS CAN WIN PRESIDENTIAL SPORTS AWARD.....The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has announced that rifle and clay target shooters have been added to the Presidential Sports Award Program. The announcement opened the way for shooters to earn the nation's highest sports award. Standards for the awards are based on recommendations from the National Shooting Sports Foundation and will require riflemen to fire a minimum of 2,500 rounds with no more than 50 rounds in any one day counting toward the total. Trap and skeet awards will also require 2,500 targets over 50 sessions. All shooting must be done under safe, regulated conditions. After meeting the qualifying standards, shooters will receive a red, blue and gold brassard, a lapel pin, and a certificate bearing the President's signature and seal. Interested shooters can obtain more information by writing the Presidential Sports Award, Box 129, Radio City Station, New York, New York 10019.

RAMSEY'S DRAFT COULD BECOME WILDERNESS.....The U. S. Forest Service has added 39 areas covering more than one million acres to its National Wilderness Preservation System study category. That brings the total national forest land now studied for inclusion in the national wilderness system to 274 areas of more than 12 million acres. Most of these areas are in the West. Congress is considering legislation for other additions to the wilderness system in the East. The main point being deliberated in that bill is whether to treat eastern wilderness the same as that in the West. Most conservationists believe that eastern wilderness should be handled somewhat differently because of biological and historical differences in the forest types. There is little virgin wilderness in the East. Most of the proposed areas have been logged and are reverting to wilderness. Three areas in Virginia could be considered for wilderness use: Ramsey's Draft in Bath County, which features a stand of giant hemlocks; Laurel Fork in Highland County; and James River Face in Rockbridge County.

THE 4TH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY has been transmitted to Congress containing only a brief mention of the nation's wildlife, the Wildlife Management Institute reports. Native wildlife rated about two pages of print in the 404-page report, about the same as it took to list members of CEQ's Advisory Committee on Alternative Automotive Power Systems. And all but 13 lines of that related to endangered species, marine mammals, and predator control. The brief mention contained the surprising statement that "increasing attention has been devoted to protecting species threatened with extinction because of man's activities, particularly sport hunting, commercial hunting, and trading." This is an interesting insinuation, since we know of no wildlife species in this country that is endangered by legal sport hunting.

By ED PEARCE
Orlando, Florida

THERE'S always been a camaraderie among deer hunters throughout the country that isn't equalled in any other sport. Both the relaxed state that the mere act of hunting fosters and the rivalry that develops among individual members of the hunting party to bag his buck contribute to this feeling.

When one of the hunters scores, this same camaraderie extends to the division of the venison among all members of the hunting party. This has long been an established custom in hunting clubs and hunting parties. Recently, however, I've detected a getting away from this admirable custom.

Venison is a delicacy rarely obtained except through one's own efforts. It's illegal to buy or sell it.

Did you know that 100% of deer killed each year is bagged by about 20% of the hunters? That only one in five hunters is successful? It's a fact that among the 20% almost all are repeaters; that is, they get their deer every year because of their proficiency in the art of hunting (marksmanship, knowledge of the deer's habits and characteristics, etc.).

If you're a member of this 20% club, or are lucky enough to be in his hunting party, you probably have access to venison. But, if you're not, you may be among the millions of people who have never tasted venison.

I was really surprised to see the following classified ad on December 13, 1970, in the Orlando (Florida) *Sentinal Star:* "WANTED—VENISON. For personal use. Former hunter, now disabled, would greatly appreciate any cut in any quantity."

On checking, I found the ad had been placed by a man crippled by rheumatoid arthritis. Walking was very difficult for him, the handling of a gun an impossibility.

On the telephone, he expressed it this way: "I've hunted for over 50 years and learned to love the stillness of the woods, the clean, fresh air, and to listen for the peculiar noises of the smaller animals. I always looked forward to the fellowship of hunting companions, and I was always confident I'd get my buck and did just that. Also, I shared my venison. I've some wonderful memories, countless photos and lots of good trophies, but I can't seem to lose my fondness for venison. To me it's something special. I can't buy it anywhere, and I won't deal with poachers; thus the ad."

His faith in the hunting fraternity proved justified. A local realtor, who had recently been on a successful hunt in Wyoming, brought him an elk roast and several pounds of mooseburger. You can be sure he made a friend.

I appeal to all successful hunters. If you haven't already done so, SHARE YOUR VENISON. If you have some stashed away in a locker, dig it out and spread your good luck around. Of course, it's not just common sense but also a nice gesture to see that the landowner on whose land you hunted is rewarded with a venison roast or other choice cut. Former hunters, disabled persons, and veterans who will never experience the joys and thrills of the greatest of sports will welcome your gift of venison. Your neighbors would be delighted with a change from beef to venison.

And when you pass along the venison, do your friend an additional favor by advising him how to cook it for maximum enjoyment.

The all-time favorite among my friends and at our house is venison stew. You don't have to have the choice cuts for this stew. It can be made from any cut or just from trimmings, from the legs, backs and shoulders. Whatever cut you use, cube the meat into one or two inch squares, or use trimmings. First, dip about three pounds of meat into a mixture of salt, pepper and flour (I shake them in a sack). Next, braise them for ten to fifteen minutes in hot fat until they are brown, then drop them into two quarts of boiling water. Simmer, covered, over low heat for about two hours until the venison is tender.

While it is simmering, finely chop two medium-sized onions, one bunch of celery and four carrots and cube four medium-sized potatoes and several mushrooms. When the venison is tender, drop these items into the boiling water, add a bay leaf and cook about 30 minutes more. Blend flour with cold water, stir into stew, and continue cooking about 10 minutes until thickened.

Such a stew is really a treat, savory and filling. It has made many friends for me. Even non-hunters and my wife love it.

Now that you've shared your venison and knowledge of how to cook it for maximum enjoyment, you've no doubt made new friends and further projected the good image of the present-day hunter.

There is an ancient phrase which says, "It's not how much you give but the idea behind the giving that really counts." The good deed has a way of coming back tenfold.

Old Jerky Is New Outdoor Treat

By LLOYD J. LINFORD
Shawnee Mission, Kansas

GENUINE outdoorsmen are not surprised to find jerky, that nutritious hand-me-down from pioneer days, enjoying revived popularity these days as an appetizer and handy snack food. It is one of those gastronomical gems that is simply too good to stay buried in the past.

When the country was young and grub was wherever a man could find it, beef and deer meet were jerked all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific by hearty men who chewed while they conquered. Where available, jerked buffalo was a favorite, too, and for a time fueled more frontier energies than any other meat.

The Indians, who developed the art of preserving meat by curing and drying it in the sun, were not as concerned about the kind of meat they jerked as its availability, and they obligingly revealed their secrets to the white man. Jerky proved highly portable, durable and nourishing, and could be eaten on the run with no fuss or muss, which made it a staple in the frontier diet and a prized item of early commerce.

These same attributes make jerky a handy answer to nourishment problems today, be it on the trail, in the backyard, or in front of the TV set. Sportsmen, legislators, soldiers, kids, hippies and just plain folks out for a good time agree that jerky makes a good chew. Even planet-hopping astronauts find it so, on their journeys "up there."

Jerky is available commercially these days in most food stores, and annual sales run into the millions. Try some. And, if your pulse quickens to the challenge of making your own, welcome to the club.

Seasoned do-it-yourselfers often have their own secret formulas for coming up with just the right blend of tooth-tension and taste delight. Some try the sun-drying method, with good results. However, it is recommended that the novice, who tackles jerky making for the first time, follow these simple procedures:

Trim off all fat before soaking.

First, select the cuts of beef or venison to be used as jerky. The fact that the meat may have been frozen makes no difference. Just let it thaw out before you start.

In the case of beef, flank or round steak is preferred. Just be sure it is very lean. For venison jerky, use the same cuts you ordinarily would lay aside for making into sausage or hamburger. Whichever meat you use—and this is important—be sure to trim away all fat and gristle, for these become rancid and spoil the finished product.

Remember, jerky is all lean. That's why some of the more fancy cuts of well-marbled beef, for instance, will not do.

After you've selected and trimmed the meat, then cut it into strips of five or six inches in length, or longer if possible, and about a quarter-inch thickness.

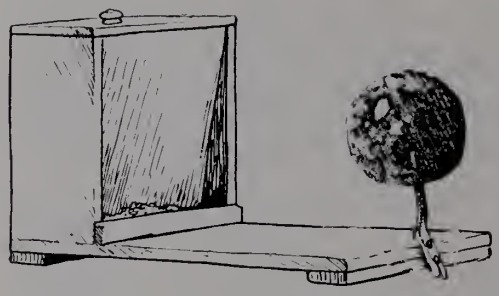
Into a bowl or dish that can be covered, place your first layer of meat, sprinkle it liberally with hickory smoked salt and, if you like, add a touch of garlic or onion salt for seasoning. Then a second layer of meat goes over the first, salt and season as before, and repeat the process until you have treated all the meat you aim to convert into jerky.

Next, cover the dish and place in your refrigerator for at least eight hours. This gives the salt and seasoning time to permeate and flavor the meat. Then place the individual strips of seasoned meat on a cookie sheet and pop them into the oven at a very low heat—175 to 200 degrees—from four to five hours.

This slow, steady heat only dehydrates the meat by removing all moisture. The meat then shrivels or shrinks, as it's supposed to do, and will be almost black in color.

When it cools, your jerky is ready to eat. Stored tightly in covered jars, it will keep a long time. On field trips, carry it with you in plastic bags or wrapped in foil to keep out moisture. Chew it on schedule or at random.

You'll find jerky to be good old-fashioned fare that adds an authentic touch of frontier gastronomy to any outdoor venture. Have plenty on hand for your next time out, and share a hearty chew with friends.



The Mystery of the Deserted Bird Feeder

By MARY HOSMER LUPTON
Charlottesville

FOR five years our bird feeder, outrigged from the front porch floor and clearly visible from our large dining-room window some three yards away, was thronged year 'round with feeding birds. There were fewer visitants in the warm months of the year and, for the most part, different species than those of the winter months, but for reasons which were hardly altruistic we continued to put out some feed year 'round. We didn't want to miss the fluttering companionship we were used to at meals.

When my husband and I left our little white house in Albemarle County in mid-December for a three weeks' camping trip to the Florida Keys, I wanted to ask the young man who would be looking after the place to fill the bird feeders (there is another one on a pole about three yards from the kitchen window, visible chiefly when I'm washing dishes). However, as he would be watering house plants, feeding two dogs and ten tropical fish, and tending to our small greenhouse, we felt that perhaps feeding the birds, except in the event of a snow storm, would be too much to ask of our young caretaker.

While we were in Florida watching at field-glasses distance laughing gulls, Caspian terns, Florida cormorants, brown pelicans, anhingas, man-o'-war birds, black skimmers, purple gallinules, yellow-crowned night herons, flamingos, and roseate spoonbills, I thought of Virginia and the three-yards-close habitués of our feeders: the cardinals, juncos, tufted titmice, blue jays, black-capped chickadees, mourning doves, red-bellied woodpeckers, song sparrows, white throats, and, in recent years, purple finches, and evening grosbeaks. I even thought longingly of our belligerent mockingbird!

When the time rolled around in early January for us to come home to Virginia, I was more than glad.

We found things at our little white house in fine shape: the dogs with coats sleek and gleaming, the tropical fish still living, and the house and greenhouse plants in better shape than when we left as I overwater everything and our young caretaker does not.

The bird feeders were bare of seed and visitors. But I thought nothing of that and confidently poured sunflower seeds and mixed seeds into both feeders, adding the apple the mockingbird likes so much to our favorite feeder by the dining room window. Contentedly I sat down with my mending to watch.

Before long the mocker appeared in the young hemlock beside the feeder. After flirting his tail several times as he looked suspiciously about him, he dropped down to the feeder for a peck at the apple. He repeated this at intervals all the afternoon. (I could be patient; I had a lot of mending to do.) But no other bird came that day.

And no other bird came to that feeder that week.

"It's just that they've lost the habit," I said to my husband; "it will take a few days for them to find it again."

"Ben (our neighbor whose fields entirely surround us) has planted quail feed patches on his land," said my husband when he came home one day. "I just saw a cloud of juncos rise from one of the lowlands. The quail patches are yielding so much seed now the birds have no motive to leave them and come up here to eat."

Regretfully I conceded that this was probably true.

But then one day my husband said: "There are still no birds but the mocker coming to the big feeder by the dining room window, but there are three juncos, two titmice, and a chickadee on the other feeder right now."

I looked and there were. Before I looked away a female cardinal joined them. But I've never had the same fondness for this feeder (it was always "the other one" to me) because you can only observe it comfortably while working at the sink. Assuming *that* is ever comfortable.

I poured sunflower seed to extravagant proportions on my big feeder thinking of the eight evening grosbeaks who came there for ten days last January and February. But days, and later weeks, passed and still no bird, save the mocker, came to that feeder. And, although he occasionally pecked at the mountain of sunflower seeds there, it was obvious he came mainly for the apple—and later apples, because he finished off about one a week.

I took to spending more time at the kitchen sink. All of our old regular customers except the purple finches and evening grosbeaks were now showing up constantly at that smaller feeder: cardinals, tufted titmice, juncos, song sparrows, white throats, yellow-bellied sapsuckers as well as zebra birds, starlings as well as blue jays.

We discussed the mystery of that crowded scene and the deserted feeder around the corner of the house but still no more than 100 feet away.

We did not replace the last apple that was eaten; and we resolved to observe the mockingbird more closely.

In other years he (or one of his species—we couldn't know because we weren't bird banders) had been beligerent and a bully at the feeders, flying at a cardinal who was feeding and driving him away while three tufted titmice took his place. Then chasing them off while four juncos took their places. Then driving them away while . . .

After a week's careful observation we became aware of certain facts:

(1) The mockingbird rarely lighted on the feeder, and there being no apple there now only pecked in a desultory way at the sunflower seeds. As far as we were able to see he actually ate nothing at all from there.

(2) He was nearly always within sight of that feeder (and our post at the dining room window), on a branch of the hemlock beside the feeder, deep within its branches, on the telephone wire that ran just above it, on the porch railing—and always watching.

(3) A chickadee, two cardinals, and two titmice at different times during that week of our close observation lighted briefly on that big feeder, but were promptly chased away before they had a chance to eat even one seed.

(4) The mockingbird never once visited the other feeder one hundred feet away.

(5) On one occasion a chickadee visited the bird house where chickadees have nested for the last five years, which is some thirty feet from the feeder guarded by the mockingbird, only to be driven off at once.

We had heard much of breeding territories fiercely defended; but this was not the breeding season. However, it seemed evident to us that the mystery of the deserted feeder was caused by some form of territoriality in the mocker.

We realized that in our absence and the lack of seed at our feeders, the birds had learned to look elsewhere for their food. When we returned and I put out an apple (an object much larger than seed and more easily spotted), the mockingbird returned to feed regularly on it. When the other birds came back, most of them smaller and all of them less belligerent than he, our mocker was able to drive them off as they came one at a time instead of many continuously. And so he had successfully made this feeder his undisputed territory.

Was this territoriality one of food only, or was it part of the nesting territoriality? And if it was a matter of nesting territoriality, could the mockingbird know by instinct as early as the second week in January when we returned from Florida that he was going to build his nest within this territory?

But the first question upon which all the others rested was, Could we evict the mocker from his dominance of our favorite feeder by the dining room window?

To begin with: We stopped all feeding at the dining room feeder, save the mocker's apple.

When that was devoured we built a new feeder 30 yards away down the front lawn, between two white birches, and there placed the next apple.

For days between chores we watched the two feeders. At first the mocker sat on the telephone wire between this new feeder and the old one he had dominated. Later we saw him perched on a white birch limb near the new feeder. He was poised to chase all other birds away that might pause there. Still later the mocker took up his station near the apple on the new feeder but never touched it (we knew this because we checked the apple); while from time to time he returned to the old feeder to chase another visitant away.

Finally we checked the apple one day to find it had been thoroughly pecked. Continuous observation showed that the mocker was working on it.

For several days he continued to return to his post on the wire beside the old feeder, ready to chase away all comers there—which he did regularly.

In all this time we had put no additional feed on the original feeder, but it took several days for the feed we had piled up there when we first came home from Florida to disappear.

As the days passed, closer to spring, the mocker spent more time at the apple on the new feeder and less time guarding our old feeder. Meanwhile the old habitués came back slowly, but in ever-increasing numbers of visits: bluejays, cardinals, juncos, white throats, zebra birds, chickadees, and tufted titmice.

We replaced the apples as they were eaten, which turned out to be two a week. And we observed two mockingbirds often at the new feeder.

Whenever our mockingbird returned to the old feeder —not too often as we put no more apples there—he immediately dispersed whatever visitants were eating there. But they soon returned, and in no sense did he completely dominate this feeder as he had.

The mocker and his mate were seen so often that we knew they must be nesting nearby, but it was not 'til June, that we found their nest in a red maple 20 yards from the old feeder.

One day I observed Dirck, our Geran Shepherd, comfortably settled beneath that maple with a young groundhog he intended to eat, but just as he began, the mocker swooped down from the maple tree, *tchacking* angrily as he struck a glancing blow at Dirck's rump.

The dog ignored the first attack, the second brought him halfway to his feet, and the third had him growling. But the fourth and all subsequent diving blows sent him into a trot toward his kennel. He was casual about it and tried to preserve his dignity. I wished that he could.

But there was no denying that our mocker was still his old belligerent self and in fine form.

CRAFTING A FUR HAT

By H. RAMSEY TERHUNE
Viewtown

IF you are a woodsman, naturalist, or hunter and have grandchildren, you are in the enviable position of a potential hero. Perhaps granddad already has experienced the reward of closer companionship as he assisted with a wild-flower collection or a bug and butterfly exhibit. But to achieve a really "Top Dog" position, let him get in the fur business!

First, and specifically, I mean a fur hat—a Daniel Boone hat. There is an aura of adventure and excitement about such a headpiece which immedately projects the youthful wearer into the glory of every fabled or factual experience of Mr. Boone, himself. And, if grandsir produces one of these creations from his own trapped or shot furs, he also is propelled into a glorious status complete with crown.

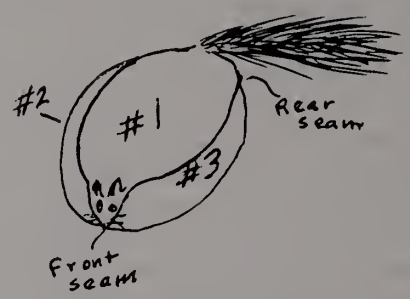
Assuming granddad is still handy with a shotgun, he just needs the hides of three gray squirrels to start his career. Quite true, the legendary Daniel Boone cap was made of coon skin, but as a beginning it is easier and cheaper to use gray squirrels. Later, this early experience will be helpful in creating the more authentic reproduction. Actually, squirrel shooting is ideal for granddads. Even if old legs have harnessed him to the front yard, he can ride the tractor to the woods, where some jack pines branches will soften that old stump or rock, as he sits out the moments between shots.

When the hunter has filled his needed quota, the hides should be removed in "cased" form and stretched on tapered shingles to effect an approximate 4″ width across the skins. Adult squirrel skins can be stretched from 9-11 inches. While the hides are drying, the craftsman should write to U. S. Department of Agriculture, or the Game Commission for a bulletin on "Home Tanning of Leather and Small Skins."

Of the several methods of tanning small furs the salt-alum process gives satisfactory results. The salt is common NaCl, table salt. The Ammonium Alum called for is carried in most country stores, a necessary item in pickle recipes, or can be obtained in drug stores. The Washing Soda (Sal Soda) will probably be found handy and available under Granny's sink. The proportions and procedures outlined in the manual are simple and easily followed. As a personal note, I prefer to immerse the skins in the tannage solution for two days to the alternative process of applying the tannage as a paste. When the skins have been immersed the required time, oil and soften as described.

Now cut the crown out of an old felt hat. This item will lend form and comfort to the new creation. When Junior's head size has been determined, remove an inverted △ or pie-shaped piece from the back of the old crown and sew together to the adjusted size. Collect a bit of gray carpet thread, a stout needle, and begin production. However, as a craftsman, you have the privilege of using your own variation and ingenuity. The following is a sample procedure. After the skins were split lengthwise on the underside, the white fur was removed from the largest skin. This one would serve as a top piece. Next, cut the white fur from the left side of #2 skin and remove the same lengthwise strip from the right side of #3 skin. Trim off the heads and tails as these roughly rectangular pieces will serve as side pieces. Leave the head on #1 skin and, of course, the tail. The head will serve to cover part of the front seam joining the left and right side pieces.

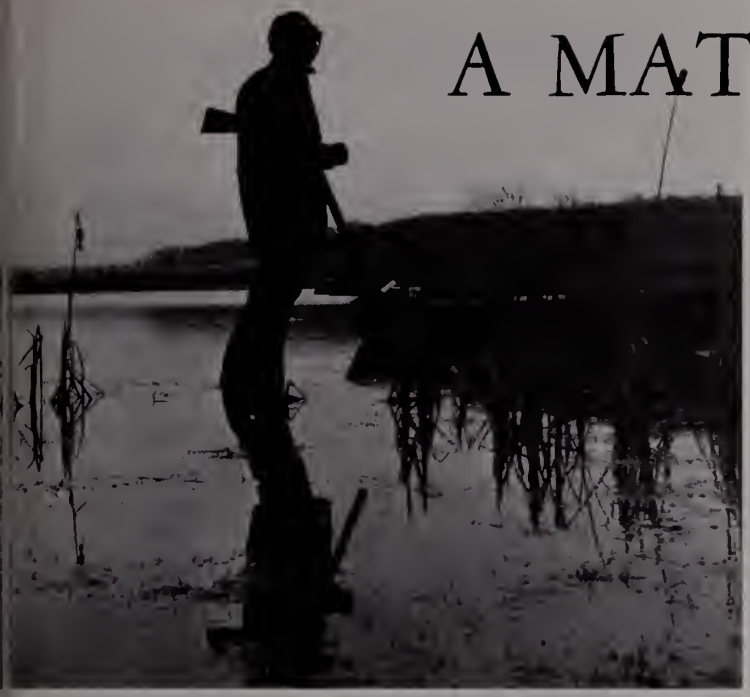
Temporarily stitch the nose of #1 pelt to the front of the felt crown. Drape the rest of the fur over the top to the rear of the top allowing the tail to hang free. The next step is to fit #2 fur to the right side and #3 to the left side, snugging the gray fur edges into the top piece. Temporary stitching of the sides and top will



give final opportunity to adjust for appearance and a solid gray blend.

When sewing the two side pieces in a seam at the front of the hat, the seam at the rear and where the edges of the sides and top meet, use an over and under stitch or over-casting as the women folks call it. One little technique in this operation is to lift the fur out of the stitch with the needle, before the thread is drawn tight. When the craftsman graduates to the manufacture of a real coon skin cap, this precaution is not necessary since one skin is sufficient for the whole Boone hat.

But, coon skin or squirrel skin, when the headpiece nears completion, spectator interest will mount as the whole family watches both the artist and his craftsmanship. It is certain that the young man who received one will beam with delight. Worn at football games and other special occasions, both the hat and the wearer are centers of admiration and envy. Moreover, the artist himself will be real proud that both his gun and his craft were on target.



A MATTER OF ESTHETICS

By PETE ELKINS
Fredericksburg

THE whole thing started with a late October dove shoot. My hunting partner, Dick Rabun, and I were casing our guns after a pleasant afternoon's shoot when we again noticed an impressive skein of ducks silhouetted against the dusk-red sky. Each time that we hunted a favorite field, we saw ducks—not just a few ducks, but large groups of ducks.

If you're fortunate enough to live near Virginia's coast and are also a hunter, then you know what it's like to see ducks high overhead on a cold autumn evening. Already you can feel the clean cold of the November marsh with salt and sea grass rich in the air. You can hear the water slapping against the base of the blind, the water dark and cold, then shining and purple and cold as the sun rises. If you don't live near the coast, yet duck hunting is for you what the South Seas were for Gauguin, then you really know what it's like to watch ducks high overhead with the duck season only a month away.

The sight of the ducks was more than enough to prompt a visit to the owner of a large farm pond nearby. After a few minutes of pleasant conversation, he kindly agreed to let Dick and me hunt his pond on opening day of the duck season.

The next few weeks passed slowly while I plotted blind location, timing, weather, and all the other anticipatory trivia that add to the pleasure of hunting. Opening day of the season found Dick tapping on my door at 5:00 a.m. in a cold-blowing snow. All my plans for camouflage were blanketed by the unexpected snow. In desperation, I furtively appropriated a few old sheets from our linen closet after checking to make sure that my wife was still asleep.

Forty-five minutes later, Dick and I reached the pond. Ten minutes later, we had readied all of our gear. We began the long walk around the dam to the marshy upper end of the pond. What had appeared to be merely a slippery, frigid walk in the darkness transformed into an enchanted journey. Under our wader-clad boots, the new snow was powdery and clean. The world was pastel white, all softness and mystery. The whiteness was everywhere. We reached the earthen dam, glowing like a stranded Moby Dick in the white darkness.

Soon, a new sound joined the silent hiss of the snow falling on our caps and on the black water. At first the sound was faint, quickly blown away in the rising wind. Then it was distinct and I forgot about the snow. Mallards were chuckling and burring among the reeds in the marsh.

It was still dark, but we flushed a group near the bank. With a watery roar, they disappeared toward a more remote part of the pond, rapid black shadows in the grayness.

We reached the spot that we had decided upon the night before. Moving quietly, talking in whispers, we set up two crude blinds, using chicken wire, sticks, and the old sheets. In the gray dawn and fresh snow, the blinds looked good. Next we tossed out a dozen inflatable decoys. After that we crawled behind the blinds, loaded our shotguns, shivered, and waited for the growing light. Light came fast in an overcast, snowy sky.

Seventy yards out to our right was a great raft of mallards and teal. On the other side of the marshy arm, strings of ruddy ducks paddled along the grassy shore. Dick and I remained absolutely motionless, frozen more by the sight than by the snow or cold. From out of an empty sky, a flock of mallards suddenly materialized. They passed overhead, well out of range, eyed our motley decoy spread, and set their wings for the raft of ducks on the water. The regret that they were out of range lasted but a moment. I watched fascinated as the mallards dropped out of the gray sky toward their brothers on the water.

All of the magic of duck hunting is condensed in that one instant when a drake mallard slips into the wind toward a landing spot. The greenhead hangs in the air, wings flared, riding an invisible tightwire toward the water. Then at the last moment, the orange legs drop, and the spectacle ends.

Apparently the ducks didn't like our blind or our ice-shiny decoys. They stayed well out of range while more

and more mallards flocked into the area. Scant minutes after I silently vowed to buy a better set of deeks, a lone drake paddled over for a closer look at the decoy spread. When he was well within the spread, we stood up. The mallard leaped skyward, but our first shot assured at least one roast duck supper.

When noon arrived, we had collected three additional mallards and one greenwing teal. More importantly, we had enjoyed a fine morning in the company of wild ducks.

Farm ponds are well recognized for their fishing potential, but their duck potential is often overlooked by hunters intent on faraway marshes and salty bays. The key to locating productive duck ponds is food. Ducks are attracted to fields and ponds with abundant food supplies. Even though ducks may sporadically visit any pond, they will remain only if ample food exists. An adult mallard requires one to two pounds of grain per week during the October to March wintering season.

Most Virginia farm ponds are managed for fishing; thus, ducks do not feed in these ponds, relying instead on nearby corn or other grainfields. For the hunter, this means that the best shooting usually occurs during the early morning when the ducks depart and return to the pond after feeding. During the rest of the day, mallards tend to raft up near the center of a pond well away from any potential danger lurking along the shoreline.

In addition to the practical reasons for hunting a pond early in the morning, there are also aesthetic reasons. Without aesthetic considerations, duck hunting or any other hunting becomes mere killing. Take away the red dawn of the hunt, the iridescent green of the mallard's head, the impossible speed of a greenwing teal, the orange legs dropping toward a landing among the decoys, the lifting flare of a mallard turning into the wind; take away these things and you can buy

the rest at any meat market.

Early morning hunting also means that the ducks will continue to use a particular pond throughout the season. After a morning hunt, the ducks remain unmolested for the remainder of the day. An all-day hunt could well convince the ducks to seek another area for food and rest.

After you've obtained the landowner's permission to hunt, don't abuse your privilege. Even if no one else is shooting the pond, limit yourself to one shoot every week or so. Overshooting may also drive the ducks away. To coin an old hunting phrase, "Use enough gun" to avoid the loss of crippled birds.

For only an average shot like me, "enough gun" means a 12 gauge with express loads of #5 or #6 shot. If you're a capable shot and limit yourself to thirty yards, a 16 gauge or even a 20 gauge will be adequate with the proper loads. Above all, no matter what gun you choose, don't take long shots with a high risk of crippling.

If you treat the landowner and the ducks with respect, farm ponds can provide exciting shooting throughout the season. Mallards and teal provide the bulk of the action. Mallards decoy well, so you may enjoy the ultimate in duck hunting—grain-fed mallards slipping into a spread of bobbing decoys.

WILD TAILS OF VIRGINIA

By GEORGE E. DOLNACK, JR.
Downingtown, Pennsylvania

NATURE equipped man with a host of tools to help him survive in his environment.

Animals were also supplied by nature with similar tools with one outstanding exception, the tail.

Yet if we were to take a close look at some of our woodland animals and study them carefully, we would find that some of them would be seriously handicapped without this seemingly useless appendage. For their tails do serve a definite purpose.

Tails serve some animals in everyday use as camouflage and fly-swatters while other woodland creatures reserve theirs for highly specialized use.

Many outdoorsmen have also fostered some false notions regarding how some animals employ their tails. These doubtful beliefs conjure up nice images in the mind and make good bull session conversation.

But in fact, tails are used by animals as a weapon and extra hand; for balancing and braking; for steering and for swimming. They also use them to signal, gather food, and warm themselves.

Everyone who has hunted the white-tailed deer is familiar with how it uses its tail for signaling and communicating with other deer. When it senses danger, the tail flies up and exposes not only its white underside but also the white of its rump. To other deer this means only one thing. Danger! Vamoose, fast! And to the hunter it means that he, perhaps, blew his big chance.

One of the most graceful things to see in the woods is an arboreal leap by that treetop acrobat, the squirrel. As it makes a long tree-to-tree jump with outstretched legs, its tail is flattened out and is used not only for steering but for stabilization as well.

If the squirrel should miss its spot or lose its footing, then its tail acts like a parachute, braking its fall as it plunges downward, allowing it to reach the ground unhurt. When it runs along a branch at a dizzy height, its bushy tail serves as a balance much the same as a tight-rope walker uses a parasol to maintain balance.

The squirrel's tail also makes a good decoy and is used to deceive its enemy. When chased by a predator, it moves its tail about in an effort to make the rapacious pursuer misjudge a pounce or swoop. If this ruse is successful, the enemy ends up with only a mouthful of fur from the tail while the squirrel scampers off none the worse, but a little wiser from the experience.

It curls its tail around its body and head when sleeping, using it to keep insects off its face during the summer. And when the wind is whipping through the trees and winter's cold is nipping at its nose, the tail serves as a blanket for added warmth.

The slow moving opossum, our prehistorical marsupial, has a bare, scaly tail that is prehensile, meaning that it can be used for grasping like an extra hand.

'Possums can hang by their tails from tree limbs. And the next time you see a 'possum come down a tree, watch it closely. You'll see that it wraps its tail around branches, using it somewhat as a brake or as a safety belt. Likewise, it will use its tail for additional support if its footing is unsure.

Our traveling pin cushion, the porcupine, has a short thick tail that is used primarily as a defensive weapon.

It will raise its tail menacingly and move it from side to side when fearful of being harmed. If its enemy comes too close, it gets slapped with the tail and quills remain in the attacker, a sharp and painful reminder that won't soon be forgotten.

Another of our bushy tailed animals, the fox, uses its tail offensively. When two foxes are battling, each tries to keep its tail between itself and the other combatant using it as a shield to afford protection from slashing teeth and sharp claws.

Like the squirrel, the fox uses its tail as a wrap-around for added warmth during cold weather.

Maneuverability of the fox while in pursuit of a fast dodging meal, such as a rabbit, has been attributed to its tail by some who believe that the constant movement of it helps the fox to maintain its agility.

Nature's engineer, that builder of dams, the beaver, makes good use of its wide flat scaly tail also.

When diving from the surface, he'll often slap the water fiercely with his tail to tilt his body downward in preparation for a dive. Other beavers interpret this loud crack as an alarm and take refuge accordingly.

A beaver's tail also serves as a paddle for swimming, a rudder for steering and as a plane for surfacing or submerging. He also uses it as a body stabilizer when swimming underwater.

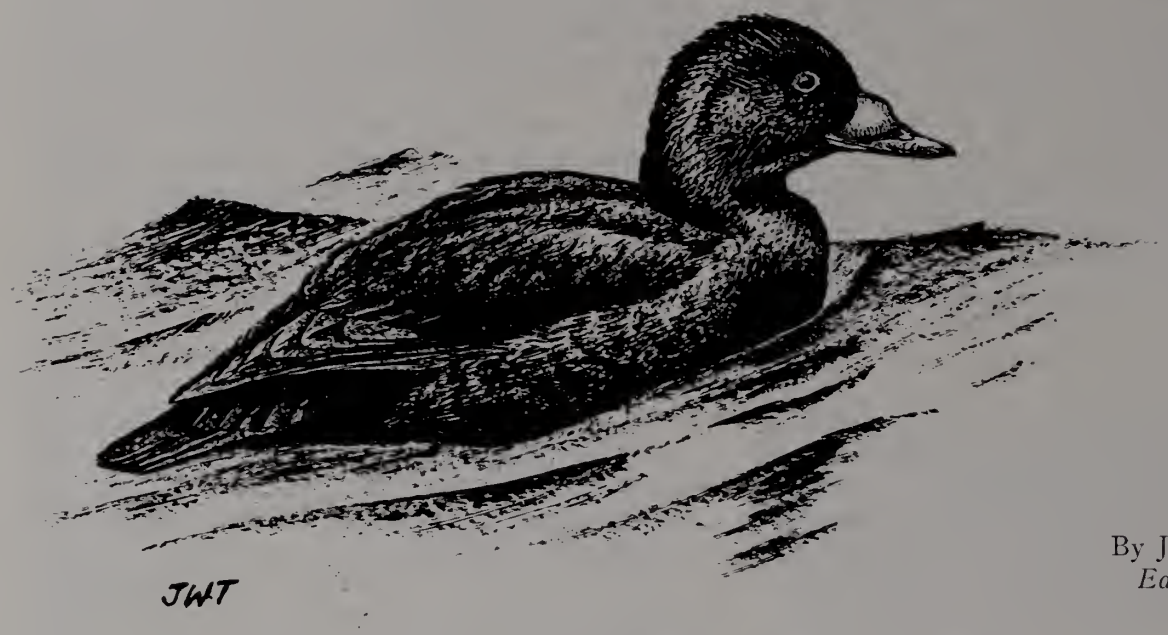
Out of the water, the beaver will use its tail as a prop to keep in an upright position when gnawing on trees and when carrying mud with its forefeet.

The thin, black, vertical, flattened tail of another of our aquatic animals, the muskrat, is also used as a rudder for steering.

And the playful otter, who delights in sliding down snow and stream banks, wriggles its sinuous tail in unison with its body to help propel itself through the water. He also uses it to steer.

Yes, tails do serve animals as tools of many uses and are of incalculable help to them. They may be the last part of an animal, but are far from being inferior in the true sense of the word.

And remember, the next time a skunk raises its tail, take heed and run like the dickens. For this critter is trying to tell you something.



Bird of the Month

By JOHN W. TAYLOR
Edgewater, Maryland

The American Scoter

SCOTERS are the dark, chunky sea ducks that float in irregular rafts just off the ocean beaches. Strictly maritime, they come inland only to nest, or to move to nesting range. They do, however, frequent the larger estuaries, and may be found on the Chesapeake, and the lower portions of the York and Potomac.

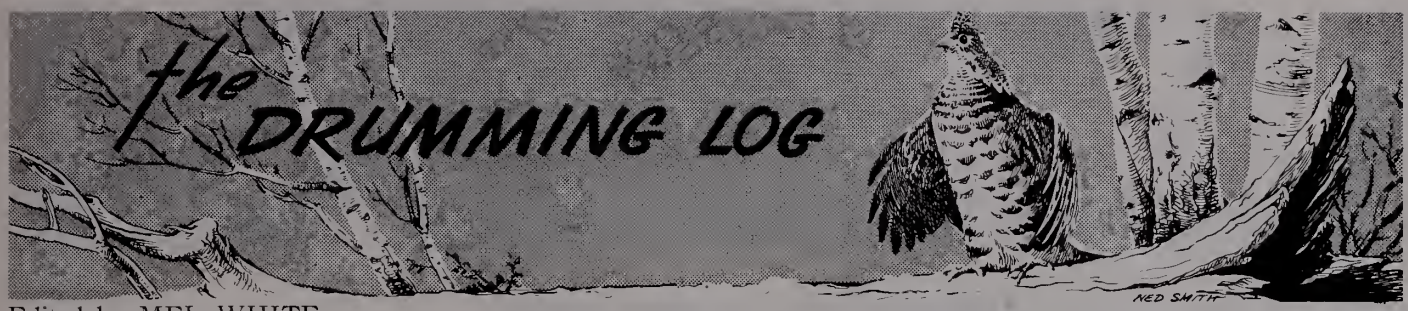
South of Long Island, hunters pay them little attention, despite the recently innovated special season on sea ducks. Not only are they hard to get close to, but they also have a reputation, not undeserved, as an unsavory table bird. In New England, though, "coot" hunting is a favorite pastime by gunners who decoy them to boats anchored offshore.

The three species of scoters are distinct in appearance, habit and distribution. The drake American scoter is the only one of the group with entirely black plumage. It is, in fact, the only completely black American waterfowl. This species is also the most coastal, is less apt to occur away from the open ocean. And, in North America, it is the least common, often being outnumbered two-to-one by its relatives. In Great Britain, the situation is reversed: this scoter is the most abundant, and has earned the name "common" scoter.

The black plumage and reddish-orange knob on the bill should serve to identify the drake American scoter. Hen birds are more difficult; all three kinds are a nondescript brown. But at close range, the light cheek and dark crown of the American can be seen. Females of the white-winged and surf scoters have *two* light patches on the head. When the three species are together, the American is noticeably the smallest.

In winter the food of scoters consists chiefly of small mussels and clams. The presence of the birds depends directly on the availability of this staple. Feeding birds are very active, diving in close massed groups. In earlier times, watermen located beds of shellfish by marking the favored feeding waters of scoters.

More vegetable food is taken in summer, on the northern breeding grounds, which are still in part unknown. Audubon found them nesting in Labrador, but many texts merely state that they nest on Arctic shores. They are an abundant breeding bird in parts of Iceland, there are many records for Newfoundland, and some writers mention James Bay. Yet the range map in Kortright's *Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America* shows them breeding only in Arctic Alaska and the Yukon.



Edited by MEL WHITE

W. Alan Guthrie (left), Wildlife Conservationist of the Year, Mrs. Guthrie, Raymond V. Corning, Soil Conservationist of the Year, and Mrs. Corning, shown with winners' statuette awards.

Game Commission photos by F. N. Satterlee

THE GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT BANQUET, recently held in Virginia Beach, was a gala affair for all attending and particularly for several Game Commission members honored for their conservation efforts.

Encouraged and supported by the Governor, this state-wide program is jointly sponsored by the Virginia Wildlife Federation, National Wildlife Federation, and Sears, Roebuck and Company.

The award winners representing the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries included; Wildlife Conservationist of the year—W. Alan Guthrie, Soil Conservationist of the Year—Raymond V. Corning, and Ms. Anne Pilcher and Warden K. P. Martin who were awarded certificates for their outstanding work. The state winners received statuettes and became eligible for national conservation awards.

Miss Ann Pilcher with certificate honoring her for outstanding work in communications.

Congratulated by James F. Miles, Jr., Virginia Wildlife Federation president, John B. Redd, Jr., (right) receives a certificate of merit for his work with wildlife conservation.

Edited by ANN PILCHER

Bassmaster Bill Cassell and Nelson Whitt help young anglers rig up for fishing.

Watching and waiting in the shade: effective carp-catching technique.

Bassmasters Youth Day

Photos by Harvie Brincefield, outing chairman

August 11 saw twenty-eight 7-14 year old boys from Faith Home near Danville competing enthusiastically for trophies awarded at the end of the Danville Bassmasters "Youth Day" fishing outing. Held as part of Virginia B.A.S.S. Youth Week, the event took place on White Oak Mountain at Owens' Clear Water Lake, a body known for its cooperative "mud bass," the carp. Using gear provided by Bassmasters, the youngsters landed 26 carp (the largest—8 lbs. 13 oz.), then enjoyed a tasty lunch of hot dogs, beans, slaw, soft drinks, and watermelon.

Youth Day contestants line bank at Owens' Clear Water Lake on White Oak Mountain.

Danville Bassmasters, Inc.—affiliated with both the Virginia B.A.S.S. Chapter Federation and with the national Bass Anglers Sportman Society (B.A.S.S.)—was organized in February 1972 to promote bass fishing, conservation and safety on our waterways, improvement of our environment, and to kindle an interest in fishing among young people. By collecting and transporting Christmas trees to Smith Mountain Lake and by tying motor vehicle tires together, the Danville group and the Virginia B.A.S.S. federation have assisted the Game Commission and VPI&SU Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit with an artificial reef project. Danville Bassmasters officers include Dr. A. M. Martin, Jr., president; Melvin Cassell, vice-president; and Robert Barker, secretary-treasurer.

Frank Shelton, Charlie Snider, and Melvin Oakes hold trophies for most fish, smallest fish, and largest fish caught.

Faith Home resident gets a close look at his catch.

What a fine fish! Bassmasters James Overby and Ronnie Reynolds agree.

Know Your WARDENS

Text & Photos by F. N. SATTERLEE

Information Officer

LAWRENCE R. BUCHANAN

Game Warden

Larry Buchanan was born and raised in Stafford County, Virginia. His parents had a small farm and, as he remembers, everyone that he knew and associated with either hunted or fished or both. He began hunting at about age ten but recalls "going along" with his grandfather on fox hunting trips when he was about six years of age.

When he was attending Stafford High School he joined the Izaak Walton League and became a member of the local Volunteer Fire Department. While with this organization he met two members of the Virginia Game Commission who were also members of the Fire Department. This meeting had a profound effect on his decision to later become a warden, for those gentlemen were R. S. Purks, who is now Assistant Chief of the Game Commission's Law Enforcement Division, and Darrell A. Ferrell, currently an Assistant Supervising Warden for Education.

Following graduation from high school, he worked with his father at the general garage that he operated, and in 1964 applied for a job as a warden and was accepted. His first assignment was to Spotsylvania County. Currently he works a three-county area including Spotsylvania, Stafford and Louisa Counties. On occasion, he also works in Orange and Madison Counties.

Larry feels that fishing and hunting is the best sport in the world, and if in his work as a warden he can help others to enjoy the outdoors and wildlife, it is a great source of satisfaction to him.

Mrs. Buchanan is the former Betty Reeves from Stafford County. She and Larry and one child make their home near Louisa, Virginia.

LESTER L. HUMPHREYS

Game Warden

Lester Humphreys is a native of Alleghany County, Virginia, where the Humphreys family lived on the outskirts of Clifton Forge, a town of about 5000 population, situated at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. It was in this atmosphere of mountains, open space and wildlife that Lester grew up and acquired a love of the outdoors. He learned about hunting from his father, and from his uncle, a deep appreciation and understanding of plants and animals. Often, during his maturing years, he and his uncle would spend entire weekends just hiking, exploring, and enjoying the wonders of nature.

Following graduation from high school, Lester was employed by a paper company in Covington, Virginia, and in 1963 he enlisted in the U. S. Army. He served for three years as a helicopter electrical specialist and was stationed in Georgia, Korea and California. After being discharged, Lester returned to his job with the paper company. He gradually became dissatisfied with the confinement of indoor work and applied for a job with the Game Commission. He was accepted and was assigned as a game warden in the Fluvanna County area during the summer of 1972. Lester feels that he now has found the work which he was cut out to do and that in doing so he is contributing to his fellow man. He and his recent bride, the former Elizabeth Flannagan of Cumberland County, live in Fork Union, Virginia.

Edited by JIM KERRICK

Motor Thefts Increase

The problem of stolen engines has grown steadily with the increased number of outboards used by the public. Multiplied industry-wide, motor thefts probably approached $1.5 million.

Portability is one big reason why thousands of boatmen prefer small horsepower outboards. Apparently this feature attracts the thief as well. Small motors are also easier for a thief to dispose of because they don't require controls and steering connections.

Two-thirds of the motors reported stolen last year were under 25 hp. Almost half of the total 500 stolen were in the 6 to 9.5 hp range. About 1/10 of the motors stolen were over 50 hp.

If your motor is stolen, it is probably gone for good. The recovery rate is low, especially for smaller motors. Stolen motors of higher horsepower are somewhat easier to spot because they are often taken without their electrical connections.

Carelessness is one big reason for motor thefts. Outboard owners should take the same precautions with their rigs that they do with their automobiles.

To protect your boat and motor against theft, follow these suggestions:

1. Record all serial numbers on the boat and motor and register them with the manufacturer. Keep a copy of these numbers for yourself.
2. Use a lock to secure your motor to your boat. Special locks are manufactured for this purpose and are a big deterrent to thievery. They are made of durable metal and cannot be broken or sawed through. Chains and bicycle type locks can be used, but chains can be cut and bicycle type locks don't protect transom bracket bolts that could be tampered with.
3. When trailering your boat, don't leave it unattended. At night, wrap the trailer safety chain around a tree or post and secure it with a lock. Never leave equipment lying loose in your unattended boat. Don't think your rig is safe parked in your garage. Thieves have been known to pull right into driveways, hook up, and drive off.
4. If your motor has electric starting, never leave the key in the ignition. Protect manual starting motors by removing a spark plug or connector.
5. Report all thefts immediately to local authorities, your marine dealer and the manufacturer.

Here are some suggestions to protect yourself against the "good deal" on a motor:

1. Be suspicious of anyone who is quick to sell a motor at less than its reasonable market value.
2. Purchase a used motor from an established dealer or from someone you know. When you buy, get the motor's registration card issued by the manufacturer. It is issued only once to the original buyer.
3. Be suspicious if the motor is missing any of its electrical connections. Many times thieves, in their haste to get away, cut the wires and connections.

Fishing Outing Strengthens Father-Son Relationship

Every fisherman takes pride in showing his son how to carry on this much-loved sport. Invariably, a few hours spent this way will result in much more than a stringer of fish. These man-to-man outings in the fall of the year provide dad with a good opportunity to strengthen father-son relationships. And a boy will learn things no book can teach him.

Keep in mind, however, that at the start young boys are usually more interested in catching fish than they are in fishing. Size is of little concern. Most young men would much prefer to catch a big batch of little bluegills than spend several hours angling for a big one that may never strike. Fortunately, lakes, rivers and streams abounding with small but eager panfish are not hard to find.

When the action wanes, the wise father will take advantage of the opportunity to better acquaint his son with the outdoors. An appreciation of nature is especially important to a boy in this decade of environmental crises. A young boy's natural curiosity will lead him to ask questions about the outdoors. The answers he gets will stay with him for a lifetime.

Going fishing with dad teaches a boy about sportsmanship. Seeing his father release handsome but undersized or out-of-season game fish is a lesson in itself, especially when accompanied by an explanation.

If fishing is done from a boat, the boy can be taught proper boating procedures at the same time. Every youngster enjoys having a turn at running the outboard and driving the boat. As a result of what he learns, he will be a better and more experienced boatman when he grows up.

One of the boy's biggest thrills is the first time he and dad camp out overnight. Early morning fishing is often the most productive, and camping provides a chance to be up at the crack of dawn. Add to that a big breakfast cooked over an open fire, highlighted by freshly caught fish, and father and son have a memory not soon forgotten.

Experiences shared with his father on such solitary excursions are likely to be some of the most warmly remembered by a growing boy, and set a pattern for a lifetime.

INDEX TO VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

VOLUME XXXIV—JANUARY 1973 THROUGH DECEMBER 1973

BIRDS

Bird of the Month—*J. W. Taylor*
- Sharp-shinned Hawk ..... Jan., p. 27
- The Red Crossbill ..... Feb., p. 27
- The Chipping Sparrow ..... Mar., p. 27
- Long-billed Marsh Wren ..... Apr., p. 27
- Black-billed Cuckoo ..... May, p. 18
- Royal Tern ..... June, p. 27
- Acadian Flycatcher ..... July, p. 27
- Little Blue Heron ..... Aug., p. 27
- The Bobolink ..... Sept., p. 27
- Semipalmated Sandpiper ..... Oct., p. 20
- The Pintail ..... Nov., p. 27
- The American Scoter ..... Dec., p. 22

A Bird in the Bush—*E. W. Benington* ..... Feb., p. 10
Partners in Appreciation—*Carl Knuth* ..... Apr., p. 8
Woodcock in Virginia—*W. H. Taylor* ..... May, p. 10
The Monk (Parakeet)—*Doris S. Peet* ..... May, p. 7
Raven Haven—*R. G. Hooper* ..... June, p. 6
The Irrepressible Blue Jay—*M. H. Berry* ..... July, p. 21
Mile High Birdwatching—*Tony Decker* ..... Aug., p. 7
The Mystery of the Deserted Bird Feeder—*Mary H. Lupton* ..... Dec., p. 16

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

A Course for Teachers on Virginia's Natural Resources ..... Feb., p. 12
Keep Virginia Beautiful, April 9-21, 1973—*Gov. Linwood Holton* ..... Apr., p. 3

CONSERVATION GENERAL

Erosion on the Eastern Shore—*C. J. Badger* ..... July, p. 9
The Great Shot Controversy—*Dick Gould* ..... Nov., p. 4

DISEASES

Notes on Rabies in Virginia—*R. H. Giles, Jr., A. B. Carey* ..... July, p. 8

EDITORIALS

Ever Hear a Crow Sing?—*J. F. McIntcer, Jr.* ..... Jan., p. 3
Bums in the Boondocks—*J. F. McIntcer, Jr.* ..... Feb., p. 3
Acts of Assembly, 1973—*J. F. McIntcer, Jr.* ..... Mar., p. 3
How to Rig a Debate—*J. F. McIntcer, Jr.* ..... May, p. 3
The "Unpractical" Ones—*J. F. Keefe* ..... July, p. 3
Waste Not—Want Not—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Aug., p. 3
Cause for Celebration—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Sept., p. 3
A Return to Reality—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Oct., p. 3
End of the Gravy Train—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Nov., p. 3
Christmas Bonus—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Dec., p. 3

FISH

The Walleye—*Duane Raver, Jr.* ..... Jan., p. 8

FISH MANAGEMENT

Know Your Biologists—*F. N. Satterlee*
- A. B. Powell ..... July, p. 25
- M. D. Norman ..... Oct., p. 25

E.D.P. and Fishery Management—*J. R. Zuboy, R. T. Lackey, N. S. Prosser, R. V. Corning* ..... Feb., p. 16
Creel Survey—*M. D. Norman, R. V. Corning* ..... Mar., p. 17
1973 Trout Stocking Plan ..... Mar., p. 25
Fish Attractors for Fishing Lakes—*Ronald Pierce* ..... May, p. 12
You Can Judge a Fish by its Cover—*W. T. Bryson, R. T. Lackey* June, p. 8

FISHING

Muskie—Crafty Fish With Bully Spirit—*Bill Cochran* ..... Feb., p. 6
Gift From the Sea—*Pete Elkins* ..... Mar., p. 8
Having Fun With Shallow-Water Bass—*Bill Cochran* ..... Mar., p. 14
Brookies of Laurel Bed Lake—*Richard Pauley* ..... Apr., p. 5
Newest Lake [Lake Willis Robertson]—*Pete Elkins* ..... Apr., p. 16
Alewives & Electronics—Claytor Lake White Bass—*Bill Cochran* May, p. 4
Chickahominy's Brawling Bass—*Pete Elkins* ..... June, p. 4
Bass Fishing—The Professional Way—*Bill Weekes* ..... July, p. 4
The Fishing Lure—*Bert Lindler* ..... July, p. 17
Virginia's Forgotten Trout—*Martin Clark* ..... July, p. 22
There's Gold in Those Swampy Looking Ponds—*Ozzie Worley* ..... Aug., p. 4
Prehistoric Pastime—*Pete Elkins* ..... Aug., p. 21
Rock Castle Smallmouths—*"Bunny" Henshaw* ..... Sept., p. 18
Spinnerbaits Spell Bass—*Bill Cochran* ..... Oct., p. 9
Off Cape Henry They Do the Bluefish Blitz—*Sonny Fentress* ..... Oct., p. 18
Find the Pattern and You Find the Bass—*Bill Cochran* ..... Nov., p. 8
Just a Trout Fishing Story—*S. H. Parsons* ..... Dec., p. 6

FOOD AND FOOD PREPARATION

Let's Cook With Sorrel—*Marjorie L. Masselin* ..... June, p. 19
Eels Are Delicious!—*Marjorie L. Masselin* ..... July, p. 11
Wild Cooking—*Elizabeth Murray* ..... Oct., p. 6
Share Your Venison—*Ed Pearce* ..... Dec., p. 14
Old Jerky Is New Outdoor Treat—*L. J. Linford* ..... Dec., p. 15

FORESTS & FORESTRY

Campgrounds and Bird Sounds—*H. S. Crawford, R. G. Hooper, R. F. Harlow* ..... May, p. 22

GUNS AND OTHER WEAPONS

Shooting the .22 WMR—*Bill Anderson* ..... Aug., p. 14
Guns, Powder, 'n' Things—*J. W. Engle, Jr.* ..... Nov., p. 20

HUMOR

Humorous Patterns of Behavior of Birds and People—*Katherine W. Moseley* ..... Mar., p. 19
A New Breed of Widows in the Same Old Weeds—*Bobbye Fentress* ..... Sept., p. 11

HUNTING

Timely Tips from an Old-Timer—*Becky Johnson* ..... Jan., p. 18
Spring Gobbler Surprise—*R. L. Pauley* ..... Mar., p. 4
Hunting the Wild Turkey—*Kit Shaffer* ..... Apr., p. 11
Virginia is for Dovers—*Sonny Fentress* ..... Sept., p. 6
Muzzle Loaders Get Their Big Chance—*Gary Brumfield* ..... Sept., p. 8
Wildlife Management and Its Non-Hunting Clientele—*Charles Callison* ..... Sept., p. 20
Eight Points and a Back Pack—*Dale Thompson* ..... Nov., p. 16
A Matter of Esthetics—*Pete Elkins* ..... Dec., p. 19

INDIVIDUAL TRIBUTES AND BIOGRAPHIES

In Conservation, Leopold Saw a Creed of Ethics—*Bill Weekes* ..... Feb., p. 20

INSECTS

Who's Afraid of Virginia's Wolf—*J. A. Sullivan* ..... Aug., p. 12

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Know Your Wardens—*F. N. Satterlee*
- Brian S. Viel, Walter L. Flory ..... Jan., p. 23
- James C. Wilson, William T. Jamison ..... Feb., p. 23
- C. T. Bland, H. R. Newcomb ..... Apr., p. 22
- D. E. Blosser, L. W. Brandt ..... June, p. 25
- Joseph R. Bellamy, Robert L. Griffith ..... Aug., p. 25
- W. L. Parker, Jr., J. W. Crickenberger ..... Sept., p. 23
- L. R. Buchanan; L. L. Humphreys ..... Dec., p. 25

Go Ahead, Be An Informer! The Game You Save May Be Your Own—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Feb., p. 19
1973 Duck Hunter's Point System Key ..... Nov., p. 14
Hunting Season Roundup ..... Nov., p. 25

LOCALES

The Natural History of Virginia Towns—*C. E. Nimmo, Jr.* ..... Jan., p. 6
Have You Seen Presquile?—*Maggie McDermott* ..... Jan., p. 7
Appalachian Trail Walk—*P. H. Dunning* ..... Jan., p. 12
Waller Mill Park—*A. W. Stewart* ..... May, p. 8
Hiawatha Nature Trail—*Bob Beck* ..... June, p. 10
Bowhunting Hot Spot—*W. R. McCabe III* ..... Oct., p. 4
Ramsey's Draft, A Step Backward in Time—*Garvey Winegar* ..... Oct., p. 16
Old Rag Mountain, a Hiker's Challenge—*R. B. Belton, Jr.* ..... Nov., p. 6

MAMMALS

R is for Raccoon—*Virginia C. Holmgren* ..... June, p. 12
Sci, the Fox Squirrel—*Carsten Ahrens* ..... Oct., p. 11
Psst—Play it Cool (pictorial)—*M. W. Reilly* ..... Nov., p. 11
The Antler Cycle—*Sam Montgomery* ..... Nov., p. 19
Serendipity and the Pump Box Peromyscus—*J. L. Sullivan* ..... Dec., p. 10
Wild Tails of Virginia—*G. E. Dolnack, Jr.* ..... Dec., p. 21

MOLLUSKS

The Snail That Builds a Raft—*M. D. Bellomy* ..... Mar., p. 10

PHILOSOPHY

Thoughts on a Mountaintop—*Bill Anderson* ..... May, p. 16
Why Fish?—*Sharon Saari* ..... Sept., p. 4
Ethics of American Sport Hunting—*Ted Fearnow* ..... Sept., p. 16

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ready, Aim, Snap!—*Steve Price* ..... June, p. 16

PICTORIAL SKETCH PLATE

It's Unlawful to Keep Wildlife in Captivity—*J. W. Taylor* ..... Jan., p. 28
Boat Owners! Is Your Motorboat Numbered? ..... Feb., p. 28
Discover Wildlife: It's Too Good to Miss—National Wildlife Week ..... Mar., p. 28
Always Remember That Big One with a Virginia Wildlife Trophy Fish Citation ..... Apr., p. 28
Nine Color Pics of Birds—Song & Insectivorous ..... May, p. 27
All In A Day's Work ..... May, p. 28
It's Unlawful to Keep Wildlife in Captivity—*J. W. Taylor* ..... June, p. 28
Panfish Parade—*Duane Raver* ..... July, p. 28
Equipment for Safe Boating—*Duane Raver* ..... Aug., p. 28
National Hunting & Fishing Day, Sept. 22, 1973—*Dorothy B. Turner* ..... Sept., p. 28
How Does That Trophy Rate? ..... Oct., p. 27
Bowhunting in Virginia ..... Oct., p. 28
Virginia's Diving Ducks ..... Nov., p. 28

PICTORIAL SPREAD

A Portfolio of Waterfowl—*J. W. Taylor* ..... June, p. 14

PLANTS

In Nature's Garden: *Elizabeth Murray*
- Shadbush ..... Feb., p. 22
- Redbud ..... Mar., p. 21
- Flowering Dogwood ..... Apr., p. 20
- Wild Azaleas ..... May, p. 14
- Parasitic Plants ..... June, p. 21
- Witch Hazel ..... Nov., p. 12

Wayfaring Flowers—*J. A. Sullivan* ..... July, p. 6
Poisonous Plants at Your Doorstep—*J. E. Skeen, J. A. Sullivan* ..... Aug., p. 18
Let's Gather Nuts—*Marjorie L. Masselin* ..... Oct., p. 7
Mistletoe and Its Legends—*Charlotte H. Green* ..... Dec., p. 4

PUBLIC RELATIONS & SPORTSMANSHIP

Code of Ethics for Outdoorsmen—*Gary Sitton* ..... June, p. 3
The Practical Sportsman—*G. M. Dodson* ..... Nov., p. 22
Are We Hunters Our Own Worst Enemy?—*Bill Anderson* ..... Dec., p. 11

RECREATION

Camping Out—*Carsten Ahrens* ..... July, p. 16
Wildlife Watching, a Family Sport—*Jack Randolph* ..... Oct., p. 21
Crafting a Fur Hat—*H. R. Terhune* ..... Dec., p. 18

REPTILES

Look-Alike Snakes—*Ed Myers* ..... July, p. 19

RESEARCH

How Old?—*W. F. Murphy, Jr., J. A. Sullivan* ..... Feb., p. 14
Gray Squirrel Nesting Study—*J. L. Coggin* ..... Apr., p. 18
Game Birds and Pesticides—*J. L. Coggin; H. W. Myers, Jr.* ..... Dec., p. 8

SAFETY OUTDOORS

Safety-Courtesy-Sportsmanship—*Patricia A. Edgar* ..... Sept., p. 14

TAXIDERMY

Frozen Life—*H. L. Gillam* ..... Apr., p. 14

TRAPPING

Saturday is for Fur Trading—*Bert Lindler* ..... Jan., p. 10

WATER RESOURCES

The River—*Ted Fearnow* ..... Aug., p. 9

WILDLIFE, GENERAL

Melody of Spring—*Susannah E. Feldman* ..... Apr., p. 4
World in the Grass—*J. A. Sullivan* ..... July, p. 14
Hunt for the Mast—*C. H. Shaffer* ..... Sept., p. 12
Get Out of My Woods!—*R. D. Roe* ..... Nov., p. 18

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Doe Deer and Apple Pie—*J. W. Raybourne, J. E. Thornton* ..... Jan., p. 4
Wise Sportsmen Plant Where They Hunt—*Ralph Rasnick* ..... Jan., p. 22
Virginia's Spring Gobbler Season—Past, Present, and Future—*J. W. Raybourne* ..... Feb., p. 4
Know Your Biologists—*F. N. Satterlee*
- John B. Redd, Jr., Norville S. Prosser ..... Mar., p. 12
- D. D. Martin, W. A. Guthrie ..... May, p. 17
- Dennis C. Hart ..... July, p. 25
- James W. Engle ..... Oct., p. 25

The Gathright Wildlife Management Area, Then and Now—*J. E. Thornton* ..... Aug., p. 15
Does the Pheasant Have a Future in Virginia?—*D. Hart* ..... Oct., p. 14

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